Gary Gygax Q&A: part VI
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Ranes
Monday, 9th February, 2004, 03:59 PM

Gary Gygax Q&A: part VI

Continued from http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=71486

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> About three years back I was playing in an OAD&D game and a wind walker was encountered. Damned if I could remember just how to attack the critter effectively, so my PC ran away, managed to escape while it was busy attacking others.
>
> Cheers,
> Gary

You... you... so what are your feelings on 'metagaming'? ;)

Omand
Monday, 9th February, 2004, 05:48 PM

Gary,

Here is my question for you. You seem to have a preference for magic-user characters, yes? Or is it simply my reading too much into the posted exploits of your characters?

Cheers :)

Calico_Jack73
Monday, 9th February, 2004, 06:16 PM

Hey Gary, I've got an opinionated question for you:

Of all the modules that you've written or played, which was your favorite and why? Also what is your most memorable moment when playing?

Cheers!

Col_Pladoh
Monday, 9th February, 2004, 07:42 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Ranes**
>
> Continued from http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=71486
>
>
> You... you... so what are your feelings on 'metagaming'? ;)

Depends on the subject matter and the character. Who can say what a PC knws and doesn't know aboit the world he lives in? if it's something that could be known, then there's no metagaming involved.

Also, coming up with new ideas not common to the assumed society should not be labeled as metagaming is the PC is reasonably inteligent.

Getting to the case of the wind walker, the PC I was playing had faced one before, also associated with a broad range of knowledgeable, high-level characters. Thus he (I) should have remembered how to attack the critter. It was a case player NUMBRAINING, NOT A HINT OF METAGAMING THERE :D

Cheers,
GAry

Col_Pladoh
Monday, 9th February, 2004, 07:54 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Omand**
>
> Gary,
>
> Here is my question for you. You seem to have a preference for magic-user characters, yes? Or is it simply my reading too much into the posted exploits of your characters?

Cheers :)

The options for m-us are more interesting to me than are those for most other classes. I have played a good number of fighters, but I prefer to play a PC that can whip out a spell now and again. My highest level PC is Mordenkainen, my last PC, created some five years back, is a gnome illusionist-thief, with about four levels in each class. I had some fun playing a half-orc cleric-assassin, but when he was killed the other (Evil) PCs with him simply looted his corpse and moved on...

In the play-test sessions of the *Lost City of Gaxmoor* module I played a straight fighter, and it was interesting, but I had to do a lot of improvisational role-playing to make it so, and many of the young gamers there were somewhat taken aback at such thespianism. Worst of all, playing in-character, I boasted to an orc chieftain that he had better comply with the group's demands for the cooperation of his force in our forthcoming attack on another band in the city...or else. That gave DM Luke Gygax all the excuse he needed to have the orcs pack up and steal away, depriving us of their help, and thefeafter our attacking and looting of the lot :eek:

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Calico_Jack73***
>
> *Hey Gary, I've got an opinionated question for you:*
>
> *Of all the modules that you've written or played, which was your favorite and why? Also what is your most memorable moment when playing?*
>
> *Cheers!*

Hah, C_J!

That's akin to asking aparentwhich child is his favorite :D

Also, most of the time I have DMed, not played modules, so it's difficultto answer in the latter context.

I believe that my favorite modules to DM were the G-D series, sans Q1. the whole made a good, long connected story with plenty of variety in location, challenges, and combat.

My favorite short module to play and DM alike is probably the generic *The Abduction of Good King Despot*, with plenty of problem solving and action packed into a short scenario.

I must say that most recently I really had a lot of fun running the *Hall of MAny Panes* for my LA group, and because I think it will likewise appeal to D20 fans, it is being done in dual system format. It is a very long module that took us about a year to finish, but the variety of challenges in it is so broad that none if us got bored, me included;)

Cheers,
Gary

T. Foster

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *My favorite short module to play and DM alike is probably the generic The Abduction of Good King Despot , with plenty of problem solving and action packed into a short scenario.*

I've got the New Infinities release of this and it's one of favorite 'one-off' modules as well. As one of the former principals of NIPI can you shed any light on who currently controls the rights to the module -- the original authors or someone else? It's very ripe for reprint and IMO would be particularly well suited for Hackmaster (due to its prescient mixture of old-school action and problem-solving with abundant humor of dubious quality).

...and while I'm here, I suppose I'll ask some more questions about the Greyhawk Campaign: a lot of stories seem to involve only 1 or 2 players (with or without assorted henchmen and hirelings). How typical were these more 'intimate' adventures compared to the larger group efforts -- in your estimation was more play done in large groups or small groups? Was it assumed that once characters reached a certain level that they would branch off into these sorts of 'extracurricular' adventures? And also, how was it decided who would play when -- was it simply a matter of which players showed up on which nights (i.e. "Rob's the only player here so I guess Robilar's going solo tonight"), or would you figure in advance which players should come when and in what combinations?

Regards,

T. Foster

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **T. Foster***
>
> *I've got the New Infinities release of this and it's one of favorite 'one-off' modules as well. As one of the former principals of NIPI can you shed any light on who currently controls the rights to the module -- the original authors or someone else? It's very ripe for reprint and IMO would be*

particularly well suited for Hackmaster (due to its prescient mixture of old-school action and problem-solving with abundant humor of dubious quality).

I can't say for sure who owns the copyright to the TAoGKD, likely WillNiebling or Russ Stambaugh IIRR. I agree that it is a great candidate for a reprint. However, as an inveterate punster, I take umbrage at: "abundant humor of dubious quality." Of course, if you meant that as being chock full of groaners, I must concur :D

> Quote:
>
> *...and while I'm here, I suppose I'll ask some more questions about the Greyhawk Campaign: a lot of stories seem to involve only 1 or 2 players (with or without assorted henchmen and hirelings). How typical were these more 'intimate' adventures compared to the larger group efforts -- in your estimation was more play done in large groups or small groups? Was it assumed that once characters reached a certain level that they would branch off into these sorts of 'extracurricular' adventures? And also, how was it decided who would play when -- was it simply a matter of which players showed up on which nights (i.e. "Rob's the only player here so I guess Robilar's going solo tonight"), or would you figure in advance which players should come when and in what combinations?*
>
> *Regards,*
>
> *T. Foster*

Back in those halcyon days we played in large groups on weekends, while during the week smaller parties were DMed by me, or another of the ones who had campaigns--Rob mainly (and thus he was made co-DM of my campaign late in 1974).

Adventures with 10 to 20 PCs were fun, if hectic, and few of any of such mass forays were of memorable sort, other than perhaps for the number of low-level characters being done for and new one's hastily rolled up. Because of that, and the fact that the more skilled veterans with higher-level PCS wanted adventures of less chaotic sort, the sessions with smaller groups were much in demand. As Ernie, Don, Rob and Terry in my house or near to it, were family or friends, they came by often to play, rob more so than the rest, followed by Ernie and Terry, for Don had a day job and a family.

As I was working at home I did not schedule play sessions, but when a gamer or two dropped in of a day, I made haste to finish immediate work and put on my DM's hat. Evening games with the regulars were generally schedules a few hours or a day or two ahead.

In 1974 the veteran group had doubled in size,and as it was necessary for me to spend more time working on revising the game, Rob took over some of those sessions. The "wild bunch" showing up for weekend adventures was also larger, so Rob and I co-DMed those mass expditions.

Cheers,
Gary

John Q. Mayhem

Mr. Gygax, where did vampires level drain come from? Also, I just wanted to say that it's amazing to me that you are talking with the rank&file. Like someone else said somewhere, what other hobby is there where you can talk to the creator?

Ranes

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Depends on the subject matter and the character. Who can say what a PC knws and doesn't know aboit the world he lives in? if it's something that could be known, then there's no metagaming involved.*

Absolutely.

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Also, coming up with new ideas not common to the assumed society should not be labeled as metagaming is the PC is reasonably inteligent.*

I totally agree.

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Getting to the case of the wind walker, the PC I was playing had faced one before, also associated with a broad range of knowledgeable, high-level characters. Thus he (I) should have remembered how to attack the critter. It was a case player NUMBRAINING, NOT A HINT OF METAGAMING THERE :D*

Now that's reassuring. :D Not that I ever thought otherwise. I just couldn't resist the opportunity...

If it's not too late, thank you for the game! And thanks for the great Q&A threads.

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:

Ho John Q,

the vampire's level drain came from me. I decided upon it as a way of simulating that monster's capacity to weaken and make helpless its victims. Once established, the level-draining attack power made all undead so able into most fearsome opponents :cool:

Of course magical and clerical means of restoring lost levels were provided--excellent ways for DMs to be rid of wishes and to drain treasure from PCs hoards and into clerical coffers.

The last special group of gamers to visit me from a distant place, summer before last, so as to go on a wild adventure across the Flanaess of Oerth had a run-in with some super-wights that drained one of their PCs. Luckily for them they were near Veluna, visited a temple there, and for only about 90% of the wealth they had acquired along the way, those lost levels were restored. If they'd have had a cleric in their party they would have been much richer at adventure's end...

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

Hey, now don't get me wrong! I can get just as caught up in power gaming as the next guy. When so enthralled, all considerations of what the PC could or could not knnow about go by the board :D

Quote:

If it's not too late, thank you for the game! And thanks for the great Q&A threads.

Not too late at all, for here I am. I enjoy taking a break from the more humdrum aspects of creative work to answer these questions. It's only when really into the toils of designing new material that I find interruptions irritation.

Cheers,
Gary

CombatWombat51

Gary,

I've got two questions about cavaliers and paladins in UA, and it's awful nice to be able to come to the author for the answers :)

First, did cavaliers roll d12's for hit points after first level, or d10's? In the table where it summarizes what hit dice different classes have, it lists both classes as getting 1d10. But on the cavalier table for advancement, it says they roll 1d12. And under that, that they get 1d10+3 at first level. So which was the typo? Do they get d10's or d12's?

Second, I've always been a bit confused by how to advance their ability scores. It says that they roll percentile dice at first level, and afterwards they roll 2d10. Personally, I take that to mean just that. However, others in my gaming group feel that by 2d10, you meant to generate a number between 1-100, as percentile dice, not 2-20. Which is the proper method?

Ok, one more question :) In the assassin's matrix in the DMG, the footnote says that assassins should plan out their assassination. That gives me the impression that the percentage chance of success is based more on the whole event of assassination, rather than on a single attack roll. But in the PHB, it simply says that an assassin can attempt to assassinate a victim whenever the assassin has surprise. Lastly, the footnote in the DMG says that certain modifiers should be incorporated. Could you give me some examples of what types of modifiers for what types of circumstances should be used?

Thanks very much,
Rick, who feels like a giant fan boy :D

EDIT: One more question! Where in the world did you come up with the title "Grand Master of Flowers"?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

Hi Comabt',

The questions call for quite a stretch of my memorY, BUT o'LL DO MY BEST.

> Quote:
>
> *First, did cavaliers roll d12's for hit points after first level, or d10's? In the table where it summarizes what hit dice different classes have, it lists both classes as getting 1d10. But on the cavalier table for advancement, it says they roll 1d12. And under that, that they get 1d10+3 at first level. So which was the typo? Do they get d10's or d12's?*

The typo is the d12, that's one I have no trouble with, for only the Barbarian was to have a d12 for HPs.

> Quote:
>
> *Second, I've always been a bit confused by how to advance their ability scores. It says that they roll percentile dice at first level, and afterwards they roll 2d10. Personally, I take that to mean just that. However, others in my gaming group feel that by 2d10, you meant to generate a number between 1-100, as percentile dice, not 2-20. Which is the proper method?*

Okay, a pause while I break out my worn copy of UA and have a gander...

No problem with the question:) For their Str, Dex, and Con scores the player rolls d% as an addition to each at the beginning of character creation. For example Str 16 + 48 on d% = 16.48, Dex 17 + 11 on d% = 17.11, and Con 15 + 64 on d% = 15.64. When the cavalier reaches 2nd level, 2d10 are rolled for each ability score, the total added to the number following the decimal point. when that reaches 00, a whole point is added to the score, up to 18.99. If a cavalier had Ste of 16.99 and went up a level, his Str would be at minimum 17.01 and could be 17.19 with two 10s coming up on the 2d10 roll.

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>
> *Ok, one more question :) In the assassin's matrix in the DMG, the footnote says that assassins should plan out their assassination. That gives me the impression that the percentage chance of success is based more on the whole event of assassination, rather than on a single attack roll. But in the PHB, it simply says that an assassin can attempt to assassinate a victim whenever the assassin has surprise. Lastly, the footnote in the DMG says that certain modifiers should be incorporated. Could you give me some examples of what types of modifiers for what types of circumstances should be used?*

Play of an assassin where a kill was to be made by the PC was meant to require both a written plan delivered to the DM and then full expanation and roleplay on the part of the player where called for in the situation. If those were properly done, the DM would ajudicate the chance for surprise more favorably. The base chance for surprising an intended victim being 2 in 6 for the unsuspecting sort, as low as 1 in 20 for someone on guard.

Modifiers are many and rather self-evident, but most apply only in the context of a planned assassinationas noted above. Of course, if the assassin is normally around the intended victim, that gives a bonus to surprise chance, and a greater one if the assassin is a trusted person.

The attack roll might be a check for successfully insinuation of poison into the victim's food or drink, slipping a deadly scorpion into the subject's boot or bed, etc.

The straight d% chance roll is meant mainly for the assassin striking by surprise in chance meeting of the intended victim.

Writing rules for roleplay was something that just wasn't done at the time the DMG was published. Frankly, I fondly assumed that sort of thing would be understood by the readers...

> Quote:
>
> *Thanks very much,*
> *Rick, who feels like a giant fan boy :D*

Welcome, and what sort of giant? :D

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **CombatWombat51***
>
> *EDIT: One more question! Where in the world did you come up with the title "Grand Master of Flowers"?*

Very sneaky! That one got me :mad:

All of the titles for the Monk Class were taken unabashedly from mah jjong, one of my favorite games. As flowers are honors tiles, delicate and beautiful, I thought it fitted well with an Eastern aesthetic martial artist, the object belying his actual prowess.

Heh,
Gary

Derulbaskul

> Quote:

I think a mah-jong set might give some clues to this.

Derulbaskul
Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 03:24 PM

Dang, you just beat me to the answer.... ;)

I fondly remember being introduced to a mah-jong set only a few months after I started AD&D (around 1982). I seem to recall there being four types of flowers... so naturally I wanted to boost the monk to a 22 level class, and then 23 levels with Xan Yae's "Supreme Mistress of Petals" title.

Col_Pladoh
Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 03:41 PM

Quote:

LOL!

I can relate to the desire to work up from #4 Flower to #1 Flower, but taking that into the realms of supernatural entities is a tile too far :eek:

Heh,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 03:46 PM

Deletion of a multiple post.

Gary

Col_Pladoh
Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 04:13 PM

Deletion of a multiple post.

Gary

BOZ

Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 04:40 PM

Hey Gary,

Don't know if you've heard this one before or not.

JRR Tolkien died not long before D&D first came out. If he had still been alive, do you think he personally would have objected to the use of the term "hobbits" and other things resembling his works that you had to remove from D&D?

Col_Pladoh

Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 07:29 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **BOZ**
>
> Hey Gary,
>
> Don't know if you've heard this one before or not.
>
> JRR Tolkien died not long before D&D first came out. If he had still been alive, do you think he personally would have objected to the use of the term "hobbits" and other things resembling his works that you had to remove from D&D?

Hoi Boz!

Speaking of pure speculation...

After some thoughtful consideration, I believe that the Good Prpfessor probably would not have raised an objection. after all, he allowed the copyrights on the trilogy to expire, and thus the Ace Books release that caused such a furor.

In another scenario, that of asking permission for use, I again believe he would have given permission. Why I can't say, other that that what is written about him characterises him as a generous man not much concerned with business.

FWIW,
Gary

BOZ

Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 08:25 PM

i found myself drawn to the same conclusion. :) purely hypothetical though, of course...

i was just looking at the back cover to FotR on my way to work (i have about 30 pages left, first time i've read it), and realized that he died in 1973 and how awfully close that was to the release of the original D&D.

Col_Pladoh

Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 09:36 PM

Right Boz,

What a trip to have had Tolkien play D&D, using it as the base of a rules system for adventures on his own Middle Earth world as Phil Barker did in regards to his Tekumel world setting!

Thinking of being able to exchange ideas with the Good Professor T. blows me away. Ah well...

Cheers,
gary

Agback

Wednesday, 11th February, 2004, 09:53 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> After some thoughtful consideration, I believe that the Good Prpfessor probably would not have raised an objection. after all, he allowed the copyrights on the trilogy to expire, and thus the Ace Books release that caused such a furor.

I'm not sure that that argument is such a dunker, because in the UK copyrights don't need to be renewed, and Professor Tolkien might simply not have been aware of the (then) peculiarities of US copyright law.

On the other hand, if you read his 'Essay on Fairy Stories', and think about the comments about historical figures, myths, and literary inventions 'going into the pot' from which subsequent tellers draw the material for their tales, I think you come to the same conclusion. I think he would have

felt honoured that his inventions had become such a prominent component of the flavour of storytelling in English.

Besides, he was a philologist, and knew enough about the history of words that he must have realised that it was absurd for someone to think of owning one.

Anyway, now that I am provoked to write, I have a question:

I have read that you did a lot of experimental play before the first release of D&D, tinkering with game features until you got things right. My question is, how systematic was this experiementation? Did you map out a possibility space and try the combinations systematically to discover what worked best? Or was it more of an incremmental approach, in which you started with a design that seemed intuitively right, tested it, and changed the things that seemed to work?

Regards,

Agback

---

sluggo the sleazebag

Hello Gary...

I have a class question for you. Do you think a cleric's presence is absolutely essential to the long-term survival of a party? In the absence of a divine caster, potions of healing are the old standby (as are frequent trips to nearby city's cleric for healing/remove disease), but is it really enough? I ask this because I usually feel obligated to play the cleric when no one else wants the job, simply to keep things running smoothly, I suppose.

Am I worried too much about survival?

Sincerely,

Sluggo

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Agback***
>
> *...*
>
> *Anyway, now that I am provoked to write, I have a question:*
>
> *I have read that you did a lot of experimental play before the first release of D&D, tinkering with game features until you got things right. My question is, how systematic was this experiementation? Did you map out a possibility space and try the combinations systematically to discover what worked best? Or was it more of an incremmental approach, in which you started with a design that seemed intuitively right, tested it, and changed the things that seemed to work?*
>
> *Regards,*
>
> *Agback*

Hi Agback,

I was as much taken with the prototype of the D&D game as anyone, so the design approach was strictly hands-on, seat-of-the-pants play and revise. The process began in the laast quarter of 1972 and continued through the spring of 1973. By summer I felt the basics were sufficient to publish the game, and only a few alterations were made between then and when the work was published in January of 1974. Thereafter, however, I went back to play-and-revise, so that before the year was out we were testing the material that was published in the *Greyhawk* D&D game supplement in 1975. In short, I was too busy having fun playing to be really organized in the writing of the game.

When later on I wrote the AD&D game I used a less chaotic approach, including a general mission statement I created for my own reference and a short outline that grew as I progressed.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **sluggo the sleazebag***
>
> *Hello Gary...*
>
> *I have a class question for you. Do you think a cleric's presence is absolutely essential to the long-term survival of a party? In the absence of a divine caster, potions of healing are the old standby (as are frequent trips to nearby city's cleric for healing/remove disease), but is it really enough? I ask this because I usually feel obligated to play the cleric when no one else wants the job, simply to keep things running smoothly, I suppose.*
>
> *Am I worried too much about survival?*

Sincerely,

Sluggo

Hoi Sluggo!

Gotta love that nick--Sluggo in *Little Lulu* comics was a favorite of mine as a boy. anyway...

The absolute need for a cleric in the adventuring party depends on the campaign. In mine, where there are plenty of undead, the players knew all too well there was a need for a cleric in a large expedition where the PCs couldn't sue magical means to depart when faced with a situation that was likely to bring some unpleasant results.

When small parties adventured--well stocked with potions of healing and extra-healing--often no cleric would be present, for the members were high level and had a lot of magical goodies to cover them in crises. for example, Mordenkainen and Bigby would teleport away in a pinch.

What you might want to do is play another sort of character that you enjoy, forget being the minder for the group, and see how things turn out. If lack of a cleric in the party causes difficulties, then go back to the class if you like,but be sure to get extra rewards for the services of that needed PC:)

Cheers,
Gary

MerricB

Where did they get the *potions of healing*, Gary? Were the temples doing a roaring business in them, or were they somewhat common in the dungeons?

Cheers!

Devall2000

Hi, Gary

I noticed a few pages back that you were discussing Castle Zagyg. Will this be the long awaited 3E version of the Castle and ruins? When can we expect it to come out?

thanks,
Jamie

Joseph Elric Smith

> Quote:
>
> ---
>
> *Originally Posted by **Devall2000***
>
> *Hi, Gary*
>
> *I noticed a few pages back that you were discussing Castle Zagyg. Will this be the long awaited 3E version of the Castle and ruins? When can we expect it to come out?*
>
> *thanks,*
> *Jamie*
>
> ---

Oh I can answer this one :) It will be written for the New C&C rules coming out from Troll lord games. It will be a boxed set, and Rob will also be releasing material for it as well.
Ken

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> ---
>
> *Originally Posted by **MerricB***
>
> *Where did they get the potions of healing, Gary? Were the temples doing a roaring business in them, or were they somewhat common in the dungeons?*
>
> *Cheers!*
>
> ---

Hi Cirrem...err, I mean Merric;) (Inside joke from another thread.)

No potions were sold, but I was liberal in distributing them in dungeon chaches and the like. Many a clerical scroll with various healing spells on them as well.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Devall2000,

Ken's answer is basically correct. the system base for *Zagyg's Castle* will be the new C&C rules from Troll Lord Games. The original spirit of the material can bets be presented in a system that is close of O/AD&D, of course.

I am in process of completing a very large campaign base module for the project, this likely appearing as a boxed set titled *Zagyg's Castle, Yggsburgh.* The material in this covering the land around a town of some 10,000 inhabitants, the town, various smaller communities, and many encounters (five dungeon-like areas in the lot), adventure hooks for the GM to flesh out. the text covers all manner of background details for the GM, so as to set the area in an existing campaign world, and develop the work through exposition in playby the group adventuring therein. The GM will know the economics, politics, and society completely, can modify it easily and make it hos own.

As soon as that is published, the Trolls will follow up with the second part of the series, *Dark Chareau,* a module designed by Rob Kuntz that introuces the Mad Archmage laterally by revealing his former domicile, that inhabited before Zagyg became a more-than-human entity.

After the second part is released there will follow about six further modules, each successively detailing *Castle Zagyg,* its upper works and dungeon levels. This modular presentation also allows for expansion of the dungeons and addition of "side adventures" as was done in our original campaign, examples of such add-ons being like my modules *Dungeonland* and *Isle of the Ape.*

In all, we expect to be busy completing this extensive creative project over the next two years.

cheers,
Gary

Melan
Friday, 13th February, 2004, 11:58 AM

Greetings!

Gary, how do you feel about city adventuring? Were cities a central feature in your campaigns, or were they more like places to rest&shop between adventures? Also, did you ever do a writeup of Greyhawk City... And if yes, is there a chance to see it under some other name - like "Dunfalcon City" or such?

Col_Pladoh
Friday, 13th February, 2004, 01:43 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Melan**
>
> Greetings!
>
> Gary, how do you feel about city adventuring? Were cities a central feature in your campaigns, or were they more like places to rest&shop between adventures? Also, did you ever do a writeup of Greyhawk City... And if yes, is there a chance to see it under some other name - like "Dunfalcon City" or such?

About one adventure in 10 was run in a city--Greyhawk or some other. If the PCs were not seeking adventure when there for R&R, bringing it to them was no problem :D

The original map of Greyhawk city was one sheet of graph paper with colored boxes indicating various places where PC would go--inns & taverns, armorers, money changers & banks, gemners & jewelers, city buildings, guilds, etc. That was expanded to two, then four map sheets, with the thieves' quarter and Rob's Green Dragon Inn shown. I was working on a very large version some 20 years back, but I abandoned it as far too detailed.

No version of the city that I designed has ever been published.

Cheers,
Gary

Derulbaskul
Friday, 13th February, 2004, 02:42 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> LOL! I can relate to the desire to work up from #4 Flower to #1 Flower, but taking that into the realms of supernatural entities is a tile too far :eek:
> Heh,
> *Gary*

Gary,

I was 13. Does that explain it? ;)

Cheers
D

Col_Pladoh
Friday, 13th February, 2004, 03:14 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Derulbaskul**
>
> Gary,

I was 13. Does that explain it? ;)

Cheers
D

Hi Derulbaskul,

The age sure does. nhot only can I relate through three sons who have been through that early teen sage, but I can recall my own thinking when I was age 13.

BTW, one of the column essays I will be writing soon for the "Up on a Soapbox" feature in *Dragon* magazine is ablut my son Luke playing D&D at age 12, the problems he had with staying in character and role-playing on the part of the DM (me).

cheers,
Gary

RFisher

Gary,

You've said that you and Rob used a sort of "shorthand" format in the key for the Castle Greyhawk dungeons from which you would wing the details. Could you give us an example of what a entry might look like? Since most of us are creating dungeons for our own use instead of publication, I think an example of how a pro does it could teach us a thing or two. :)

And--let me add to the thanks I expressed before. The more I think about it, the more I realize what a profound impact you and the gang at TSR, as well as Marc Miller and the gang at GDW have had on my life. Since I got my first D&D Basic Set in 1981, role playing games have been the primary fuel of my imagination. The games challenged me to understand them. They suggested books to read. They got me to study history and science (without it being an assignment). They got me to study probability and analyze rules. They inspired creation of game mechanics, characters, worlds. I could go on and on.

The funny thing is that today I'm finding that OD&D and classic Traveller again are appealling to me more than nearly anything else available. (Although the new Conan RPG is calling to me...)

T. Foster

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***

No version of the city that I designed has ever been published.

Hi Gary,

First off I've been remiss in thanking you for your kind (and extensive) answers to my previous questions, so I offer my sincere, if belated, thanks now and hope you didn't think I wasn't appreciative of your answers.

But now, onto another question :) Following up on the answer above (re: Greyhawk City), were the details of the city (including both the map and other sundry details -- street names, building locations, description of the city's walls and gates, sewer system, etc.) provided in the novel *City of Hawks* (and to a lesser extent in the other Gord books) drawn from your actual game version of the city or were they newly invented (re-invented?) for the purposes of that novel alone? I spent a lot of time and effort combing through those books back in the day gleaning details for use in my own games set in Greyhawk City (as an antidote to the bland bland bland version published by TSR -- talk about disappointment!).

Gratitude and regards,

T. Foster

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **RFisher***

Gary,

You've said that you and Rob used a sort of "shorthand" format in the key for the Castle Greyhawk dungeons from which you would wing the details. Could you give us an example of what a entry might look like? Since most of us are creating dungeons for our own use instead of publication, I think an example of how a pro does it could teach us a thing or two. :)

Well, RF...

What we used was not 'pro" but simply veteran DM notes to more easily wing the actual action. Traps and "trick" areas were detailed in regards to trigger and damage or result from activating a trick.

Monster encounters looked like this: 12 ORCS, 4 with crossbows, 7-12 gp each, POTION OF HEROISM in hole under water barrel. Will fight until death.

Depending on the party entering their area, the HPs would be set high, or rolled, or set low. Likewise, the orcs might have a spy hole, detect the approaching party, fire through loopholes in the door and wall, or else be sitting around and possibly surprised.

Special encounters might be more detailed, two or three lines of notes.

Whatever was there was just to stimulate the DM's imagination and inspire something that suited the party for good or ill.

> Quote:
>
> *And--let me add to the thanks I expressed before. The more I think about it, the more I realize what a profound impact you and the gang at TSR, as well as Marc Miller and the gang at GDW have had on my life. Since I got my first D&D Basic Set in 1981, role playing games have been the primary fuel of my imagination. The games challenged me to understand them. They suggested books to read. They got me to study history and science (without it being an assignment). They got me to study probability and analyze rules. They inspired creation of game mechanics, characters, worlds. I could go on and on.*

Indeed, a lot has come out of the original D&D game;)

[/QUOTE]The funny thing is that today I'm finding that OD&D and classic Traveller again are appealing to me more than nearly anything else available. (Although the new Conan RPG is calling to me...)[/QUOTE]

From my perspective wanting less in the way of rules constraints comes from being a veteran Game Master who feels confident that good material comes from imagination and player interaction with the environment that textbook rules material.

Cheers,
Gary

Show 20 post(s) from this thread on one page

Col_Pladoh
Friday, 13th February, 2004, 10:53 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **T. Foster***

Hi Gary,

First off I've been remiss in thanking you for your kind (and extensive) answers to my previous questions, so I offer my sincere, if belated, thanks now and hope you didn't think I wasn't appreciative of your answers.

Howdy TF:)

No need to thank me, and I do not assume that lack of a special note doing that after I have replied to someone is a lack of gratitude. Appreciate your thoughtfulness, though!

Quote:

But now, onto another question :) Following up on the answer above (re: Greyhawk City), were the details of the city (including both the map and other sundry details -- street names, building locations, description of the city's walls and gates, sewer system, etc.) provided in the novel City of Hawks (and to a lesser extent in the other Gord books) drawn from your actual game version of the city or were they newly invented (re-invented?) for the purposes of that novel alone? I spent a lot of time and effort combing through those books back in the day gleaning details for use in my own games set in Greyhawk City (as an antidote to the bland bland bland version published by TSR -- talk about disappointment!).

Gratitude and regards,

T. Foster

---

the city material I included in the Gord novels was either from my notes, memory, or created to fill in gaps. The latter material was meant to be true to my vision of the City of Greyhawk, its infrastructure, places, and persons.

Your combing the books and gleaning details means you are following my template, but don't let that constrain your own addition to the setting. Rob was always addint material, and I used to have to consilt with him about what he had brought into the mix after he had run a city adventure.

What I am embarassed to admit is that such research likely makes you more expert than I am in regards to city details, most of which I have forgotten in the decades elapsed snce I write the stories, the memories replaced by later stories, adventures and urban settings.

Cheers,
Gary

Jehosephat
Saturday, 14th February, 2004, 10:23 AM

Greetings Gary,

In addition to Fantasy, Western, and Sci-Fi what other genres of novels and/or rpgs do you enjoy?

Also I am feeling a bit nostalgic tonight, thinking a bit about rpgs that I haven't played in years and such. So there are a few things I was curious about from the old days. I was wondering, how much playtesting did you personally do on Merle Rasmussen's Top Secret game? Also a couple of questions about Darlene Pekul. I first want to say that I loved her Greyhawk maps. If ever there was an rpg product worthy of framing and hanging on a wall, it was those maps. So, do you recall how much role playing she did around TSR in those days? And, do you know what Darlene is doing these days?

Sincerely,
Jehosephat.

Col_Pladoh
Saturday, 14th February, 2004, 01:40 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Jehosephat***

Greetings Gary,

In addition to Fantasy, Western, and Sci-Fi what other genres of novels and/or rpgs do you enjoy?

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Sincerely,
Jehosephat.

Hi Jehosephat,

As for RPG genres, I'll likely play any sort if I have the time and opportunity-- wierd fantasy, horror, cyberpunk. I enjoy history and historical novels, horror, mysteries, and the old Oriental adventure yarns.

I did indeed playtest *Top Secret,* and son Luke ran a short-lived campaign in which I played. I also play-tested and played *Star Frontiers* and *Gangbusters.*

As for Darlene, I don't recall her doing much RPG play, but I most certainly do agree that her maps for the WoG were tops! Sheis now married, living on the East Coast, and considering doing some map work for my *Zagyg's Castle* project :cool:

Cheers,
Gary

Gez

Spawned from an unrelated discussion on Nutkinland:

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Cyragnome**
>
> *What have I told you about using Ouija boards?*

Speaking French (doh!) and German, the weird name of these yesyes boards intrigued me.

So I looked up google, and found this, which is quite interesting.

> E.C. Reiche, Elijah Bond, and Charles Kennard ... created an all new alphanumeric design. They spread the letters of the alphabet in twin arcs across the middle of the board. Below the letters were the numbers one to ten. In the corners were "YES" and "NO."
>
> Kennard called the new board Ouija (pronounced 'wE-ja) after the Egyptian word for good luck. Ouija is not really Egyptian for good luck, but since the board reportedly told him it was during a session, the name stuck.*
>
> Kennard lost his company and it was taken over by his former foreman, William Fuld, in 1892.
>
> One of William Fuld's first public relations gimmicks, as master of his new company, was to reinvent the history of the Ouija board. He said that he himself had invented the board and that the name Ouija was a fusion of the French word "oui" for yes, and the German "ja" for yes.*

So, I just wonder... Was the Greyhawk godess Wee-Jas named after ouija boards? Should her name be pronounced "Weeya"?

Col_Pladoh

Well Gez...

A long introduction to a short question there;)

As the deity under consideration here was an invention of Len Lakofka, I can't speak to the source for his creative thinking or to the matter of how her name is pronounced...other than to note that Len said "Wee-Jaz," with a slight stress on the first syllable.

Cheers,
Gary

Jehosephat

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> *Hi Jehosephat,*
>
> *As for RPG genres, I'll likely play any sort if I have the time and opportunity-- wierd fantasy, horror, cyberpunk. I enjoy history and historical novels, horror, mysteries, and the old Oriental adventure yarns.*
>
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> *As for Darlene, I don't recall her doing much RPG play, but I most certainly do agree that her maps for the WoG were tops! Sheis now married, living on the East Coast, and considering doing some map work for my Zagyg's Castle project :cool:*
>
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

Well, if Darlene does end up doing the maps, there's yet another reason to give this product a chance. :D I can't wait.

sluggo the sleazebag

Hi Gary....

Thanks for your prompt reply to my last message. It's nice to see that you take the time to answer your fans' questions. Anyway, I've got some more for you...

What do you think of this so-called "epic-level" play? From what I've read of your famous characters, I imagine you've had a few opportunities to explore this particular avenue of gaming.

First off, what do you think are the primary distinctions between low-level play and the higher-level stuff? Do you prefer one over another? Also, how can high-level campaigns be tailored to instill a sense of dread when the characters have already acheived so much and are rarely challenged at higher levels?

When you are running high-level games, do you introduce Oerth-shaking monsters into those sessions? For example, have you ever thrown the tarrasque at anyone? What about deities? Does divine-intervention interfere with the fantasy element or augment it?

Lastly, what advice can you give to players (and dms) who are embarking on their first high-level campaign? Could you give us a Mordenkainen (or Bigby) tidbit to illustrate that wisdom?

Thanks again,

Sluggo

AFGNCAAP

Hello Mr. Gygax,

I've enjoyed reading your responses to these threads, as well as the "Up on a Soapbox" columns in *Dragon* magazine. I apologize if any of the questions that I bring have been asked before (hopefully, some of the more diligent member sof the board will hastily point me in the direction of the answer-bearing thread, if not reiterating it outright).

First, how did you come across Finnish mythology? Other than Lonnrot's *Kalevala*, it seems to be a mythology that is rarely touched upon by most sources (well, at least most American sources, it seems--but then again, I may have just have been looking at/for the wrong type of books).

Second, I enjoyed reading the "Giants in the Earth" column from early issues of *Dragon*, esp. when stats of notable fantasy literary characters graced the pages (I still remember the large stat block provided for Conan in issue #36, depicting the Cimmerian at various stages of his adventuring career). Did you want to try to obtain permission for creating D&D rule sets (or an RPG in general) for any of these properties? I know Lankhmar saw a D&D incarnation, as well as Conan via a pair of modules (plus the non-D&D style Conan RPG). For example, if feasible, would you have tried to go for a *Lord of the Rings* or *Wizard of Earthsea* RPG?

And finally (after mentioning on the topic of Lankhmar), my last question is not that of a gamer, but that of a big fan of the late Fritz Leiber's works. Which of Mr. Leiber's Fafhrd & Grey Mouser stories have you enjoyed the most?

Thank you for your time (& patience),

AFGNCAAP

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
> ---
> *Originally Posted by **Jehosephat***
> *Well, if Darlene does end up doing the maps, there's yet another reason to give this product a chance. :D I can't wait.*
> ---

If she is the cartographer, I am sure Troll Lord Games will make that fact known.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
> ---
> *Originally Posted by **sluggo the sleazebag***
> *Hi Gary....*
>
> *Thanks for your prompt reply to my last message. It's nice to see that you take the time to answer your fans' questions. Anyway, I've got some more for you...*
> ---

Welcome, SLuggo, and happy to supply such answers as I can.

> Quote:
> ---
> *What do you think of this so-called "epic-level" play? From what I've read of your famous characters, I imagine you've had a few opportunities to*

explore this particular avenue of gaming.

As presented in new D&D, I don't like epic level play in the least. The characters have no archetype, are more super-heroes from comic books that fantasy heroes.

When Mordenkainen hit 18th level he was virtually retired, went only on special quests. The last time he was played it was against a pair of ancient white dragons. Before that he was transported with a group of lower-level PCs to the Starship Warden. However...

At 14th level through the next few above that he played for a good bit of time in Francois Marcela Froideval's campaign. At those levels Mordenkainen was a low-level "flunkie" type, as the movers and shakers in that setting were of high 30th and 40th level, Frnacois had a complete campaign based on ultra-high level characters, and believe me it was filled with challenges and a very real sense of danger for PCs of under 30th level, I should think. there was a lot of roleplay, and the wrong dialog coming from a chatacter could be fatal...

> Quote:
>
> *First off, what do you think are the primary distinctions between low-level play and the higher-level stuff? Do you prefer one over another? Also, how can high-level campaigns be tailored to instill a sense of dread when the characters have already acheived so much and are rarely challenged at higher levels?*

The OAD&D game was written to challenge PCs from 1st through about 16th level. Above 16th there were few challenges--other than some combinations of potent monsters or high-level NPCs, or else very difficult problem solving with extreme penalties for failure.

The typical adventure quest is a matter of scale, low-level monsters, problems that suit the capacity of the party. Up through around 16th evel the management of the adventure is simply a matter of scaling up the challenges the PCs must overcome. When the PCs are about 16th to 18th level, then some very special preparations must be made by the DM to present interesting material that is logical and will stretch the capacities of the high-leve; characters in their pursuit of their goals.

The G series of modules were aimed at testing PCs of mid level, and the D series were for higher level characters. The Drow city of Erelhicindlu was meant to be a scary place for 16th - 18th level PCs.

> Quote:
>
> *When you are running high-level games, do you introduce Oerth-shaking monsters into those sessions? For example, have you ever thrown the tarrasque at anyone? What about deities? Does divine-intervention interfere with the fantasy element or augment it?*

Outside of the *Vault of the Drow,* I have run very few high-level adventures. All of my players retired their PCs from general play when those characters reached the mid-teens in level. As most groups are of lower level, having a potent character with a party of lesser sort was not much fun.

I never used the tarrasque (Francois did in his games, also demi-deities). When wishing to challenge high-level PCs I use a combination of potent monsters, including demons or devils and tricks and traps. The encounter with the vampire and succubus in module D3 is a good example of that.

Divine intervention used properly certainly enhances the fantasy epic, but the deities invoked should not become the heroes of the adventure, only elements that add to the whole. If the deities are playing a major role in the adventure, then there must be those that oppose and threaten as well as assist the PC party.

In all, I do not design adventures involving a lot of deities, but that can be done. Consider the deCamp and Pratt novel, *The Incomplete Enchanter,* in which the giants involved are deital.

> Quote:
>
> *Lastly, what advice can you give to players (and dms) who are embarking on their first high-level campaign? Could you give us a Mordenkainen (or Bigby) tidbit to illustrate that wisdom?*
>
> *Thanks again,*
>
> *Sluggo*

As you'll note from my previous responses, I have run very few really high-level adventures, so I have no more advice to offer that what has been stated already. After surpassing 18th level, Mordenkainen and Bigby have adventured alone (with some lower level companions), as were no suitable challenges for them in cooperation.

To prepare for high-level adventures, the DMmust needs present a setting where the "masters" of the environment are of tremendous potency, demi-deities. Their opponents must be of like power, and the main servants of these overlords need to be NPCs of greater level that the PCs who will be interacting with them. The monsters presented will need to be beefed up by the DM so as to be of comparitive level, and above, with the adventuring characters.

Cheers,
Gary

Gray Mouser

Colonel,

I was just perusing an old *Dragon* and came upon your thoughts for a 2nd edition of AD&D. I will avoid any comment as to my thoughts on the post-Gygaxian 2nd edition and ask this question instead:

You mentioned in the article the removal of monks to an oriental-themed campaign setting. When I first read this many years ago I remember thinking "Yes, that makes sense." Of course, in retrospect, I remember on of my favorite PC's being a mid-level monk PC. Not to mention the central role they play(ed) in Greyhawk's Scarlet Brotherhood.

Were you planning on removing the monk element from the Brotherhood or simply making them an exception to the rule? (Heh, heh, come to think of it, I'd like to see what would have gone into a 2nd edition "World of Greyhawk"!).

Thanks!

Gray Mouser

Geoffrey

Gary, back in my AD&D days my group liked to stick to the basics when creating PCs. Everybody tended to be human rather than demi-human, and we almost never used the sub-classes (which are noted as optional, anyway). Thus, everybody tended to be one of the following types of characters:

human cleric
human fighter
human magic-user
human thief

However, of the four the thief always seemed to be the least popular and the least useful class. Maybe this was because of our gaming style, or perhaps because we seldom had city-based adventures. My question is this: How essential to a balanced AD&D party is the thief? While I don't see how a party could get by without clerics, fighters, and magic-users, I've long scratched my head on just how essential the thief is to a party's continued success. To us, the thief always seemed more non-essential (similar to a druid or a monk) than one would think since it's one of the four core classes.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***
>
> *Colonel,*
>
> *I was just perusing an old Dragon and came upon your thoughts for a 2nd edition of AD&D. I will avoid any comment as to my thoughts on the post-Gygaxian 2nd edition and ask this question instead:*
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> *Were you planning on removing the monk element from the Brotherhood or simply making them an exception to the rule? (Heh, heh, come to think of it, I'd like to see what would have gone into a 2nd edition "World of Greyhawk"!).*
>
> *Thanks!*
>
> *Gray Mouser*

Hi Mouser,

What I was contemplating was a non-Oriental sort of Monk character to replace the clearly Eastern martial artist one featured. The class would likely have been a sort of dedicated warrior-spy with a few elements of the original Monk class, new abilities of more European sort to round it out. that way the Scarlet Brotherhoob would not have had to lost its warrior-monk component.

All the notes I had for the new classes are gone, so don't ask for details :(

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Geoffrey***
>
> *Gary, back in my AD&D days my group liked to stick to the basics when creating PCs. Everybody tended to be human rather than demi-human, and we almost never used the sub-classes (which are noted as optional, anyway). Thus, everybody tended to be one of the following types of characters:*
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> *However, of the four the thief always seemed to be the least popular and the least useful class. Maybe this was because of our gaming style, or perhaps because we seldom had city-based adventures. My question is this: How essential to a balanced AD&D party is the thief? While I don't see how a party could get by without clerics, fighters, and magic-users, I've long scratched my head on just how essential the thief is to a party's continued success. To us, the thief always seemed more non-essential (similar to a druid or a monk) than one would think since it's one of the four core classes.*

The thief is a strong archetype in fantasy and adventure stories in general. The main drawback to having one in the party was...theft! Otherwise, we always appreciated a thief PC being able to scout ahead, check for and remove traps, pick locks, cimb up where the rest of the PCs couldn't

reach easily, and even pop out of shadows to strike a dangerous opponent for added damage.

As encounters became more complex and dangerous, the party's thief became a lot more in demand. Just being able to have a member go ahead, see what was awaiting, and return to warn the other PCs was often the difference between success and failure.

Thief characters that prospered understoon that their purloining had to be kept to a reasonably modest "extra share," or else the other PC would grab them, turn them upside hown, and shake them :D Of course when I was DMing I did my best to encoutrage thieves to be greedy, so as to give the party problems from within, that seeming logical when they had a sneaky stealer of wealth along.

When I played a multi-classed demi-human with that ability I made sure to keep on the good side of the non-thief PCs too.

Cheers,
Gary

Bloodstone Press
Monday, 16th February, 2004, 11:23 PM

Hi Gary,

I remember reading the 1e DMG when I was a kid and thinking "Wow, this guy is really smart."

And even now sometimes I read things you say and I still think "Damn. He's so smart."

So I gotta ask, what is your educational background? Ever been to college? If so, what did you study?

Silver Moon
Monday, 16th February, 2004, 11:33 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> BTW, one of the column essays I will be writing soon for the "Up on a Soapbox" feature in Dragon magazine is about my son Luke playing D&D at age 12, the problems he had with staying in character and role-playing on the part of the DM (me).

I'll be looking forward to reading that column. I've just started a childrens game with my three youngsters, ages 6, 8 and 11, and am finding it a lot of fun but also quite challenging, trying to keep everything age appropriate. I've found that the trio are all natural role players with great imaginations. It's also a very different pace than my regular game, as we spent four-hours of gaming just picking out their equipment and discussing what each item can be used for!

Col_Pladoh
Monday, 16th February, 2004, 11:56 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Bloodstone Press**
>
> Hi Gary,
>
> I remember reading the 1e DMG when I was a kid and thinking "Wow, this guy is really smart."
>
> And even now sometimes I read things you say and I still think "Damn. He's so smart."
>
> So I gotta ask, what is your educational background? Ever been to college? If so, what did you study?

Well, I sometimes get too big for my britches, but those who know me are quick to deflate my bloating ego.

I never finished high school, attended junior college in Chicago, picked up a fair number of English and anthropology-sociology credits amongst various other classes. As I was on the Dean's list and had professors pushing me, I was admitted to the U. of Chicago, but I took a job in insurance instead. Thus, most of what I know came by my own study and reading, and listening to knowledgeable folk, certainly.

When I was at the Washington School of Psychaiatry in 1984 (IIRR) speaking to the faculty on creatiity, the concensus was that my IQ was very high--over 200. Of course, knowing how little I actually know and can do well, I am flattered but dubious. I have given large seminars on gaming and had mere pre-adolescent audience members ask me questions I had extreme difficulty answering, so I know i am far from the Light of the Ages. I just happen to rest well... :D

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
Tuesday, 17th February, 2004, 12:00 AM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Silver Moon**
>
> I'll be looking forward to reading that column. I've just started a childrens game with my three youngsters, ages 6, 8 and 11, and am finding it a lot of fun but also quite challenging, trying to keep everything age appropriate. I've found that the trio are all natural role players with great imaginations. It's also a very different pace than my regular game, as we spent four-hours of gaming just picking out their equipment and discussing what each item can be used for!

Good, Silver Moon:)

Playing games, especially RPGs with your children is sure to build bonds and help them to grow mentally. As long as it is a group of siblings, likely roleplay will be easy and come naturally as "let's pretend." however, of you add outsiders to the group, especially older persons, your children will likely become shy and constrained in that regard

Cheers,
Gary

Jehosephat

Good day to you Gary !! :)

I have a quick question for you on the art of being a good gamemaster. I know you have probably answered this at some point in your career, but I missed it. Do you think being a great gamemaster is a natural ability or a learned one?

mistere29

i read this about the "r" series of modules. could you verify it?

"According to author Frank Mentzer, these modules are set in the World of Greyhawk, though at the continent opposite the one in the published campaign setting. The plan was to eventually incorporate them into another World of Greyhawk set -- plans that ended when Gary Gygax left TSR in 1985 (thanks to Brett Easterbrook and Frank Mentzer for this info)."

Along the same lines, were there ever any plans to release more material on the world of greyhawk (other than modules). obviously, the skeleton world concept would preclude detailed setting info, but was there ever any plans to add new areas, like say a continent for oriental adventures.

CRGreathouse
Wednesday, 18th February, 2004, 04:22 AM

I have some questions about monster origins--if you don't mind, Gary. I'd really like to know where the ideas came from originally: legends, thought processes, inspirations, etc.

What can you (will you) tell us about the Umber Hulk? They're my favorite D&D monsters, really. What inspired you? I like the fact that they look like ordinary monsters, but they're actually intelligent and have a particular 'culture' of their own.

What about the diobolic heirarchy (Type I, II, ... or their named equivilents)? Were those designed wholecloth, or did you find inspiration in particular sources? Dante seems a natural influence...?

---

dmprata
Wednesday, 18th February, 2004, 09:02 PM

Flanaess Weather

Hi Gary! Before anything else, I simply must thank you for being so gracious as to field our questions here. I had the pleasure of meeting you at the Higgins Museum in Massachusetts last year, and you were every bit as personable and gregarious as you come across on these pages. Thank you, thank you, thank you for my 21 years of gaming enjoyment!
OK, that's the end of my groveling . . . ;) I was hoping you could clear something up for me in regards to weather in the Flanaess. I only recently acquired the old Glossography (yay, eBay!), and I was curious about the weather table and climatic data therein. Was it really your intention to make the place so &^$% hot all the time? I know you hate cold weather, but, if that table is accurate, the baseline temperature in the Yeomanry during the month of Harvester (for example) averages nearly 100 degrees Fahrenheit!
I'm not as concerned with the actual table as I am with the rationale behind it. I had always assumed that the Flanaess was generally temperate (albeit with an extended summer season). However, the map of latitudes shows the 40th parallel running through the Shield Lands, about 400 miles north of where I thought it would be. That places the Frost, Snow, and Ice Barbarian lands at about 50 degrees north (which seems far too mild), and most of the south-central states well into the sub-tropics. Was that your intention, or perhaps an editing error?

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mistere29
Thursday, 19th February, 2004, 07:37 PM

I know you changed your (and rob's) greyhawk campaign around for publication. How much of the setting was developed during actual play. (as opposed to detailed for the published setting.)

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grodog
Saturday, 28th February, 2004, 11:39 PM

Hi Gary---

Any updates on the Castle Zagig project to share? The more juicy details, the better, of course :D

Unrelatedly, Gary, had you created the ruined monastary from the 1e DMG example of play and sample dungeon map for the DMG itself or was it drawn from your GH campaign?

O Brasileiro
Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 02:55 AM

Hello my Master, my Lord.
I cannot resist to ask: which is your favorite system? The original D&D, AD&D or the new D&D?

Col_Pladoh
Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 01:09 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Jehosephat**
>
> Good day to you Gary !! :)
>
> I have a quick question for you on the art of being a good gamemaster. I know you have probably answered this at some point in your career, but I missed it. Do you think being a great gamemaster is a natural ability or a learned one?

Hi Jehosephat,

As with most things of creative sort I believe that the really great GMs have a natural talent for it. Most of us are not so blessed, but with desire and practise and we are able to do a good job of it. I might have great ideas for adventures, but I do not consider myself to be a great GM, adaquate usually, sometimes near-great becaus eof enthusiasm, and now and then pretty dismal.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 01:13 PM

Mistere29,

Yes indeed, Frank spoke truth. As I have said before I did intend to expand the WoG setting to cover the complete planet. In that regard LEn LAkofka, Francois Marcela Froideval, and Frank Mentzer were all to be involved in the shape of the added continents and islands.

No real work had been done on this project, though, when I parted from TSR at the end of 1985.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 01:27 PM

Hail CRGreathouse,

Allow me to preface my answers with a brief statement regarding my reading. From the time I was about five I was read fairy tales and read them. Soon thereafter I added fables and legends, and by age 12 I was an avid fan of fantasy and SF stories, reading a book a day. Along with that I read a lot of mythology and history (fact and fiction), some Westerns, Murder and Oriental mystery stories, horror, occult, and action yarns. Later on, in searching for new creatures to add to the D&D monster roster I devoted a lot of research time to folklore.

The umber hulk a creation made from the whole cloth of my imagination. they were meant to be a considerable challenge to potent PCs, so they were given the abilities you appreciate.

The demon types I, II, III, etc. were similarly devised using mainly my imagination. The devils were a mix of imagination and Dante's writing.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 01:42 PM

Well, dmprata...

Stop or you'll turn my head!

Whew! That's better. I was afraid I'd have to go out and buy a larger-sized hat

I'm not as concerned with the actual table as I am with the rationale behind it. I had always assumed that the Flanaess was generally temperate (albeit with an extended summer season). However, the map of latitudes shows the 40th parallel running through the Shield Lands, about 400 miles north of where I thought it would be. That places the Frost, Snow, and Ice Barbarian lands at about 50 degrees north (which seems far too mild), and most of the south-central states well into the sub-tropics. Was that your intention, or perhaps an editing error?

You are spot on in regards my preference for a warmer clime:) The seasons in the WoG speak volumes in that regard, and I confess to a great fondness for a Mediterranean-like environment.

The weather tables were done by another person, so you are actually preaching to the choir, more or less. While I was quite satisfied with informal climatology and general information in regards weather, many gamers wanted more specific systems. Frank Mentzer had a friend with such data, so that is how the weather tables for Oerick came about. I must accept the blame for incongruities, of course, as I okayed the material. Of course, being a DM who always flew by the seat of his pants, I never used them, so I failed to spot the glitches. When I was running a game the weather was what I said it was;)

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
<div align="right">Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 02:02 PM</div>

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

I know you changed your (and rob's) greyhawk campaign around for publication. How much of the setting was developed during actual play. (as opposed to detailed for the published setting.)

Further Greetings, Mistere29,

You are ahead of Rob and I in regards the re-creation of our original dungeon levels. I am nearly finished with new campaign-base material for the central thems, the ruined castle and its many dungeons. Rob, meantime, is devising an introduction to Zagyg, the Mad Archmage. All of that will take a few more months to complete. When that is accomplished, we will then turn out attention to the castle and dungeons.

We will use my original scheme of the dungeons, altering them as need be for coherant presentation to a general audience of GMs. That means a lot more text and explanation, for I winged encounters, and as Rob learned from me, so did he. The major features from the original levels he and I designed will be included in the re-design of the castle, just as my original work was incorporated into the huge new dungeon complex Rob and I created by combining our respective castles. Additionally, as that complex was explored and exploited, we created new levels and changed things. In all, the original work was one that was in progress, continually in flux of change.

We will do our best to make the printed version not only true to the spirit of the underlying material, but also accommodating for GMs who wish to have "living" dungeons.

Finally, we will not give all away. Where there are great mysteries involved, such as the Great Stone Face and the Disappearing Jeweled Man, we plan to offer the GMs several possible answers :D Overall, the PCs adventuring in the dungeons will encounter the same challenges as faced the original delvers in 1972 and onwards, that Robilar discovered and Mordenkainen met.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
<div align="right">Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 02:09 PM</div>

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **grodog***

Hi Gary---

Any updates on the Castle Zagig project to share? The more juicy details, the better, of course :D

Hoi Allen!

See the post immediately above this one. I am supposed to be working on details of a dungeon-like area, one of five to be included, in the campaign base setting for the *Castle Zagyg* project now. I need to finish off correspondence and board postings, make a fresh pot of coffee, and get to creative work soon...

[/QUOTE]Unrelatedly, Gary, had you created the ruined monastary from the 1e DMG example of play and sample dungeon map for the DMG itself or was it drawn from your GH campaign?[/QUOTE]

The example you note was created especially for the DMG and was not a part of the GH campaign. Wherever possible I kept the two separate so as to have the large group playing in the campaign getting new material.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh
<div align="right">Sunday, 29th February, 2004, 02:17 PM</div>

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **O Brasileiro***

Hello my Master, my Lord.

I cannot resist to ask: which is your favorite system? The original D&D, AD&D or the new D&D?

Thanks for the softball, O Brasileiro:)

My favorite system is my newest one, the *Lejendary Adventure* RPG. After three plus decades of play I have come to most enjoy a rules-light, skill-based system, and that's what the LA game is. I find it inspires my creativity in play and in writing game material. Rules-heavy systems smother my capacity to innovate.

As for D&D gaming, I very much enjoy playing either the first D&D system (three booklets) or else OAD&D. The *Castle Zagyg* modules are being designed based on the upcoming *Castles & Crusades* rules being done by Troll Lord Games using the OGL and being as close to OAD&D as that license will allow.

Cheers,
Gary

Silver Moon

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> *The umber hulk a creation made from the whole cloth of my imagination. they were meant to be a considerable challenge to potent PCs, so they were given the abilities you appreciate.*

And continues to be a great monster to this day! Incidentally, the plastic/rubber Umber Hulk 6" action figure was my daughter's favorite bath toy back when she was a baby. I guess we corrupted her at a young age, as she now loves playing the game at age 11. :)

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Silver Moon**
>
> *And continues to be a great monster to this day! Incidentally, the plastic/rubber Umber Hulk 6" action figure was my daughter's favorite bath toy back when she was a baby. I guess we corrupted her at a young age, as she now loves playing the game at age 11. :)*

Heh, SilverMoon,

Those rubbery toys with metal inner skeletons were actually manufactured to TSR's specs over in the Orient. As TSR wasn't really set up to be a toy company, they didn't do all that well, so they are pretty much collectors items these days.

In all it is good to bring children into gaming by means of interesting bath toys:)

Cheers,
Gary

---

mistere29

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> *Further Greetings, Mistere29,*
>
> *You are ahead of Rob and I in regards the re-creation of our original dungeon levels.*

Actually i was talking about the campaign away from castle Greyhawk and Greyhawk city. I was curious to know how much of the world got deveopled outside the main city and campaign as time went and you wanted to provide new challenges for your group. (not counting the stuff created for new players, like the temple of elemental evil)

I'm asking because i'm planning a legendary earth campaign and i'm not sure what i want to do. I could pick a particular area and develop it in detail (like a big city and one monster dungeon), thus leaving the rest of the world for new campaings.

Or

I could put less detail into the area with the idea that all of the new challenges would be in new areas. I would be using more of the setting material, but there would be no famliar home base. (like robliar's green dragon inn from greyhawk)

My players don't have any preference, so i was wondering what you did in your campaigns.

Col_Pladoh

Ciao Mistere29,

Actualy, about 80% of the game action in my old GH campaign centered on the castle and dungeons and in city adventures. Wilderness adventuring covered the balance of what wasn't published in various modules from TSR. The dungeon-centricity of the campaign was by popular demand, and that's why there were so many levels and side adventures based off of encounters in the depths;)

As for your LA game campaign, why not go with what most appeals to you, what you feel confortable with and have a lot of fun with? This will generally translate to the players enjoying things, for your enthusiasm will be contageous.

In my own game I don't hesitate to use a published module now and again so as to change the pace from my style to that of another--a bit at least.

Come on back if that doesn't cover it.

Cheers,
Gary

---

schnee

Gary,

I started RPGs twenty years ago, with the first D&D Basic box set. Thanks for all the fun, and I'm glad to see you still designing games.

I'm a relatively new DM, and about to run a group through the Return to the Tomb of Horrors. Do you have any specific DM advice you can offer? Things to avoid? Encouragement? We generated characters specifically for this adventure (I warned them not to get too attached, hehe) and I told them they're in for a wild ride.

*** SPOILER for those who haven't run the Tomb of Horrors

Also, a few of the traps seem to kill the players on chance alone rather than stupidity or lack of forethought... I'm thinking specifically about the green slime tapestries in the mechanical 'bucking bronco' room. What was the rationale for having that trap? Is that a 'test of character' that I'm just not seeing?

*** END SPOILER

Thanks.

Col_Pladoh

Howdy Schnee,

Don't confuse the RttToH, which I did not write, with the original ToH. In the latter there are no mechanical bucking broncos or green slime tapestries. Of course the incautious will find plenty of certain death opportunities in the original adventure...

Only the most veteran of my group attempted to explore the ToH with their regular PCs. Son Ernie and Terry Kuntz retreated when they discovered how difficult and deadly a dungeon their PC faced. Rob Kuntz with PC Robilar made it to the end, losing some dozen or so orc troops along the initial route, and when faced with the rising skull of the demi-lich did the logical thing for his character--scoooped up the treasure and retreated in utmost haste. Note all of those forays were by single PCs, Robilar accompanied by flunkies.

A number of large parties of PCs made the journey into the tomb, some with many survivors, and two I know of defeated the demi-lich. The most innovative solution was by a tournament group that used the reverse end of the scepter to touch the crown gained with it in the throne room. When the skull arose one of the PCs popped the crown on it, another used the scepter, and the demi-lich was powder. Russ Stambaugh was their DM, and when he told me what they had managed to pull off, I awarded them first place hands down.

The adventure is meant to be deadly, kill off all the unwary PCs, and make the survivors paranoid. It is best played with characters created for the adventure, not the regulars in a campaign, as the ToH is unforgiving and often results in TPK.

Cheers,
Gary

Altalazar

Greetings Gary,

I have played for over 20 years, starting with the light blue Basic Set. I've always loved the game and wish I could play much more regularly than I do these days - with full time (and then some) work and law school at night, I seldom have time for anything resembling fun.

Which brings me to my rather unusual question - since I am studying law now, I decided to use the tools at my disposal to satisfy my curiosity and looked up all of your old cases that are now catalogued - the rulings, that is.

I have read also your account of the "history" of TSR and the lawsuits mentioned therein. I was curious just what was most memorable or not about the suits and what it made you think of the civil court system going through them. I guess as a law student and a gamer, I'm fascinated when the two worlds meet. It seems strange to think of a judge talking about gaming terms - but then I see it in the case. I imagine the judge was rather clueless about what gaming even was. Did you find that to be the case?

I realize this is a rather open-ended, perhaps pointless question, but I just couldn't resist asking.

(And now I wonder if anyone, anywhere has roleplayed an actual "lawyer" character. :))

Oh, and thanks for creating the game that started it all. I have had so many fun times over the years as the result of that first seed.

Col_Pladoh

Hi Altalazar,

The suit I filed against TSR, Williams, et al. was for compliance with the terms of the Shareholders' Agreement regarding buying and selling stock. Judge Reed who presided over that fiasco was clearly unaware of contract law, so it is a good thing he didn't have to know anything

about games. As i understand it, he was the most appealed judge in the State of Wisconsin. Shortly after hearing my case election time rolled around, and he lost his bid for retaining his office. What rankled me a good deal was that the judge grew up one door north and across one street from me. He was about five years older than I, and when i was about 10 years old he and two of his buddies strong-armed me out of a BB pistol. then sent me and my friend running by shoting at us with a 410 shotgun blast...

The suit filed by TSR against us for the *Dangerous Journeys* game system never got to trial. We were indeed concerned about the capacity of the judge to understand the RP game form, my legal counsel was very knowledgeable, felt no normal judge would be able to grasp the matter. I suppose that's why they insisted we settle out of court, take the money and run.

Cheers,
Gary

Son_of_Thunder

Monday, 1st March, 2004, 06:39 PM

Epiphany!

Gary,

Holy smokes!!! This quote from yourself on page two is exactly how I've been feeling lately.

"From my perspective wanting less in the way of rules constraints comes from being a veteran Game Master who feels confident that good material comes from imagination and player interaction with the environment that textbook rules material.

Cheers,
Gary"

At 33 years of age I've found myself going back to my OAD&D books more than my new edition books. When did you say your hardback for LA was coming out?

Son of Thunder

Col_Pladoh

Monday, 1st March, 2004, 07:50 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Son_of_Thunder**
>
> Gary,
>
> Holy smokes!!! This quote from yourself on page two is exactly how I've been feeling lately.

Howdy!

I suppose that enjoy being free to innovate as they run adventures share that sentiment, yes... ;)

Anwyay, I've edited the quote below so that it reads more coherently, I hope:

Quote:

> "From my perspective wanting less in the way of rules constraints comes from being a veteran Game Master who feels confident that more good material comes from imagination and player interaction with the environment than from textbook rules material.

Quote:

> At 33 years of age I've found myself going back to my OAD&D books more than my new edition books. When did you say your hardback for LA was coming out?
>
> Son of Thunder

Well, despite your tender years it is apparent that you are a confident Game Master with a desire to have the adventure matter more than rule-playing does.

Before the hardback LA core rules books are published I want to have two paperback supplements released, so that those with the softcover version don't feel they are beingforced to buy a whole new set of books. As it stands the supplements will be published next year, so that means the revised hardcover LA core rules books will be released late in 2005 or 2006.

Cheers,
Gary

RFisher

Monday, 1st March, 2004, 08:15 PM

Gary,

I always wondered about Gord's special abilities that you described in the appendix to the first novel. (If I recall correctly: +1 to hit/damage w/ longsword & dagger, no penalties for dual-weilding, was that it?) Are these only there because you were writing fiction, or would you let PCs have this sort of thing?

Another completely unrelated thing I wondered about recently: In the early days, when Rob DMed for you, were you typically the only player? It seems like nearly all of the tales I recall of your PCs don't feature anyone else's PCs.

I was thinking of asking what question you get asked the most. Then I thought it might be more interesting to ask: What is a question you hardly

ever get asked that you think should be asked more often?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **RFisher***
>
> *Gary,*
>
> *I always wondered about Gord's special abilities that you described in the appendix to the first novel. (If I recall correctly: +1 to hit/damage w/ longsword & dagger, no penalties for dual-weilding, was that it?) Are these only there because you were writing fiction, or would you let PCs have this sort of thing?*

The last time I read that particular book was about 15 years ago, so I confess to no memory of the special capacities I noted for Gord. That said, they can be easily explained by sword specialization. ambedexterity, and the fact that his father was a deity;) You can bet your last buck that I didn't allow that sort of thing for a PC...

Quote:

> *Another completely unrelated thing I wondered about recently: In the early days, when Rob DMed for you, were you typically the only player? It seems like nearly all of the tales I recall of your PCs don't feature anyone else's PCs.*

Because Rob was kind enough to DM for me when I was working at home, about half of the adventures I enjoyed were single player--me playing one or more, usually more, of my PCs. the remainder of play was with one or more other persons, on occasion a dozen or more, so I can play just about any way. the tales I recount are generally those of more memorable sort--easy when only one person is making the decisions and those decisions turn out very well or most unfortunate...

Quote:

> *I was thinking of asking what question you get asked the most. Then I thought it might be more interesting to ask: What is a question you hardly ever get asked that you think should be asked more often?*

You found just the right question, one that I am interested in answering too!
If nobody has asked, who cares what I think about something not sufficiently interesting to others to have inquired about? ;)

Oh all right: Do I enjoy killing PCs when I GM? A The answer is definately not in the least, especially if they belong to regular players. there I do all I can to prevent such loss without directly intervening in players' actions for their characters. However, rather like playing "giveaway checkers," such a session can be fun and challenging as a convention game where arbitrary means of having characters meet their demise are out of the question. The last session I played like that was at GenCon 2002, and darned if one of the nine PCS didn't manage to save her PC from death, so the team beat me as the GM.

Heh,
Gary

schnee

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Don't confuse the RttToH, which I did not write, with the original ToH. In the latter there are no mechanical bucking broncos or green slime tapestries.*

Ah, my apologies for not being specific enough. The question I asked was about the original Tomb of Horrors (wholly contained within RttToH). The room I mentioned is #21, 'The Agitated Chamber'; it contains the tapestries and floor I speak of. After thinking about it a bit, I guess they're traps for players who lose sight of their intended goal - looting instead of trying to find and slay the great evil.

Thanks for the anecdotes - using the sceptre and crown is brillant! I hope my players are as clever.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **schnee***
>
> *Ah, my apologies for not being specific enough. The question I asked was about the original Tomb of Horrors (wholly contained within RttToH). The room I mentioned is #21, 'The Agitated Chamber'; it contains the tapestries and floor I speak of. After thinking about it a bit, I guess they're traps for players who lose sight of their intended goal - looting instead of trying to find and slay the great evil.*
>
> *...*

Ah, yes of course. the"mechanical bull" reference threw me off. The room where the movement will rip the tapestries if being handled, cause them to revert to their actual material, green slime, is exactly as you discerned, a trap for greedy PCs who have lost sight of their mission.

I have a sheet posted for my players that says: "FOCUS: MISSION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, Strategy, Tactics, Logistics" ;)

Cheers,

Gary

A system question regarding AD&D

Hi Gary,

I wanted to pick your brain for some knowledge of the Surprise and Initiative systems in AD&D 1st Edition. Here are my thoughts on how it works, would you mind pointing out there errors and clarifying some of my points that may be a little off ?

Thanks in advance for your time!

Surprise:
Both sides roll surprise....If one side is surprised, and the other is not...The score of the higher is subtracted from the lower to determine how many segments the losing side is surprised, based on the table in both the PHB and the DMG.

If both sides are surprised, the same occurs to determine which side (if any) gets actions before the other, and how many segments of action the "winning" side gets.

During surprise, characters can get a full round's worth of action in only a segment's time - and possibly double the rate of fire for missile weapons.

Initiative:
Spellcasting is done independantly from initiative. A spell's segment determines where in the round the commencement of the spell takes place, in regards to weapon attacks and other spellcasters.

Spellcasting must be announced prior to rolling for initiative.

A character attacking a spellcaster may lose initiative, but still complete his attack before the the spell is cast. Subtract the fighter's sides initiative roll from the weapon speed of the fighter's weapon. If the result is higher than the spell's segment time, the attack takes place AFTER the spell commences. If the result is the same as the casting time, the attack is simultaneous with the casting of the spell. If the result is lower than the spell's casting segment, the attack happens before the spell can be cast, in which case a successfull, or "non-saved" attack causes the spell to fail.

Other than the above scenario, weapon speed is only used when simultaneous initiative is rolled after the initial round of combat (A weapon's speed does not apply to the initial round of combat), in which case it determines which opponent strikes first. The faster weapon speed is then compared to the slower to determine if the faster weapon gets additional (Extra) attacks before the slower weapon gets it's attack. If the weapon speed of the slower weapon is at least twice as much (or 5 factors more) the speed of the faster weapon, the character with the faster weapon gets two attacks. If it is 10 or more, the character with the faster weapon gets two attacks before, and one attack simultaneous with the slower-weaponed character.

In the case of a weapon set against charge, the initiative is automatically given to the character with the weapon set against an onrushing opponent.

A fighter able to strike more than once during a round will attack once before opponents with only a single attack. A fighter with multiple attacks fighting another fighter with multiple attacks uses initiative to tell who attacks first.

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Melkor***
>
> *Hi Gary,*
>
> *I wanted to pick your brain for some knowledge of the Surprise and Initiative systems in AD&D 1st Edition. Here are my thoughts on how it works, would you mind pointing out there errors and clarifying some of my points that may be a little off ?*
>
> *Thanks in advance for your time!*

Hi Melkor:)

Those are some lengthy and very well-phrased questions. Thanks for the latter, as it maked answering easy.

> Quote:
>
> *Surprise:*
> *...*

Your understanding is correct.

> Quote:
>
> *Initiative:*
> *Spellcasting is done independantly from initiative. A spell's segment determines where in the round the commencement of the spell takes place, in regards to weapon attacks and other spellcasters.*
>
> *Spellcasting must be announced prior to rolling for initiative.*
>
> *...*

Yes, as the spell-caster announces intent first, that means he is commencing the activation of the spell at the beginning of the round, so initiative does not affect that.

As for the rest you are also correct.

> Quote:
>
> *Other than the above scenario, weapon speed is only used when simultaneous initiative is rolled after the initial round of combat (A weapon's speed does not apply to the initial round of combat),*

Where initiative is equal the longer weapon strikes first in the initial round.

> Quote:
>
> *in which case it determines which opponent strikes first. The faster weapon speed is then compared to the slower to determine if the faster weapon gets additional (Extra) attacks before the slower weapon gets it's attack. If the weapon speed of the slower weapon is at least twice as much (or 5 factors more) the speed of the faster weapon, the character with the faster weapon gets two attacks. If it is 10 or more, the character with the faster weapon gets two attacks before, and one attack simultaneous with the slower-weaponed character.*

We seldom used this rule, but yes, that is correct.

> Quote:
>
> *In the case of a weapon set against charge, the initiative is automatically given to the character with the weapon set against an onrushing opponent.*

The exception to this would be where the onrushing opponent has a longer weapon--a lancer versus an opponent with a short pole-arm or spear of 8' or less length.

[/QUOTE]A fighter able to strike more than once during a round will attack once before opponents with only a single attack. A fighter with multiple attacks fighting another fighter with multiple attacks uses initiative to tell who attacks first.[/QUOTE]

Yes, that is correct, but when two opponents with two attacks each are concerned, the one with initiative strikes first, then the slower responds, the initiative holder attacks a second time, followed by the second attack of the slower combatant. A third attack by both follows that sequence. If only one had a third attack it would follow the last of the second exchange.

Cheers,
Gary

Melkor

Thanks for the response Gary.
I appreciate you taking the time to address one of the "tricky" parts of AD&D that has left a question mark in my mind for years.

A few follow-up 1st Edition questions if I may:

How many of the rules in the original Unearthed Arcana, Wilderness Survival Guide, and Dungeoneer's Survival Guide made their way into your campaigns (Correct me if I am wrong, but I was under the impression that only a limited amount of material found in UA was actually written by you) ?

Did you use Ability/Attribute checks in your campaigns, or did you assign an arbitrary percent chance to activities that the character might attempt which were not covered by class abilities ?

How did you handle situations where a character of one class (say Fighter) was attempting to use Move Silently or Climb Walls - Two situations that when taken literally (i.e. - the Thief can Move with ABSOLUTE SILENCE whereas someone else might attempt to move stealthily, and the Thief can climb SHEER SURFACES wheras someone else might climb a rough cliff, or a tree), would mean that only the Thief could attempt them, but when looked at in a broader fashion, might be allowed for a character of any class ?

How were "Secondary Skills" used in your campaigns ? Did you just allow a bonus when making an Ability Check if the character posessed a relevant Secondary Skills ?

And finally, in the years you have had to look back upon 1st Edition, are there any specific things that you would have changed about the system if you had the opportunity to revise it ?

Thanks again Gary!

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Melkor***
>
> *Thanks for the response Gary.*
> *I appreciate you taking the time to address one of the "tricky" parts of AD&D that has left a question mark in my mind for years.*
>
> *A few follow-up 1st Edition questions if I may:*

Groan! Seeing as how you are so polite, how can I refuse? So even though I am in the modst of detailing a dungeon level's encounters I'll break for a bvit and respond.

All of the material in UA was mainly of my creation, gathered from articles I wrote in *Dragon* magazine. virtually oll of that material was used in my campaign, much of it before the book was published. I never used anything from the other two books, though, the survival guides.

> Quote:
>
> *Did you use Ability/Attribute checks in your campaigns, or did you assign an arbitrary percent chance to activities that the character might attempt which were not covered by class abilities ?*

If a player wanted a character to do something not covered by class but otherwise logically possible I would usually have a check rolled against the associated ability, with a bonus or penalty depending on the action and the difficulty rating I considered applicable. the rolls were made on d20 against the ability, as adjusted, a score of at or under the number arrived at meaninga success.

> Quote:
>
> *How did you handle situations where a character of one class (say Fighter) was attempting to use Move Silently or Climb Walls - Two situations that when taken literally (i.e. - the Thief can Move with ABSOLUTE SILENCE whereas someone else might attempt to move stealthily, and the Thief can climb SHEER SURFACES wheras someone else might climb a rough cliff, or a tree), would mean that only the Thief could attempt them, but when looked at in a broader fashion, might be allowed for a character of any class ?*

Generally common sense was applied. A fighter in metal armor can't move silently, but without that impediment a Dex ability roll with modifiers for surface and/or footwear, would be called for. Same for climbing, metal armor makes that almost impossible, plate particularly so. When climbing or some like activity, was required for a group, I set a probability for all non-thieves, and had each player roll for his PC. The check might have been on any die; for example jumping over a crevass might use d6, a 6 meaning a failure, or a d10 with 9-0 or only 0 a failure. Again, arbitrary perhaps, but based on common sense. the main idea was to convey the sense of danger with a reasonable chance for success, perhaps a more than reasonable one for the sake of the game;)

> Quote:
>
> *How were "Secondary Skills" used in your campaigns ? Did you just allow a bonus when making an Ability Check if the character posessed a relevant Secondary Skills ?*

Most of my players ignored such opportunities, being contyent to focus on activities of their PC class. When someone wanted to include secondary skills I'd allow them to choose from the list or make up their own. Application was automatic if a simple use, otherwise a chack against an applicable ability score was made, modified as needed by difficulty and circumstances.

> Quote:
>
> *And finally, in the years you have had to look back upon 1st Edition, are there any specific things that you would have changed about the system if you had the opportunity to revise it ?*
>
> *Thanks again Gary!*

Water under the bridge is long gone, and there's little benefit in analyzing the distant flow. For my current thinking in regards to FRPG system excellence, I refer you to the *Lejendary Adventure* game :cool:

Cheers,
Gary

Melkor

Thanks Gary.

Again, I really appreciate you taking the time to answer my questions....I know you are "up to your elbows" in dungeon design at the moment, which strangely, is exactly what I picture the creator of D&D should be doing at any given time of the day or night. ;)

I own an early printing of the 3 LA books, and I plan on purchasing the version Troll Lord releases. So while I plan on supporting the line, I haven't had a chance to actually play the game.

Take care, and good luck with your current projects.

Cheers.

Col_Pladoh

Welcome Melkor:)

If you want to give the LA system a test, go on over to www.lejendary.com and download the free pdf that is available there, "LA Quickstart Rules." It is a complete product, with instructions, rules, six pre-generated Avatar characters, and a good adventure for the Lejend master to run.

Now back to pipulating an underground lake;)

Cheers,

Gary

Whitey

Happy GM's day.

If anybody should get special kind wishes today, it's you - and if there's anybody who can really answer this question, it's you.
Beyond 'everybody has a good time', what would you say are the five most important elements of a dungeon/campaign/quest? You should answer that as broadly or specifically as you like.
It'll give us something to think about here while we're waiting on Castle Zagyg.

solomanii

I just finished re-reading Descent into the Depths of the Earth. One thing I really like about GG modules is the unbelievable attention to the treasure. Not sure if you customised each one or if its all random, but I love the little touches. Instead of saying 1 Diamond and 400pp we get 143pp, 29gp and a delicate brooch shaped like a small spider.

Did you do this on purpose or was it random?

I also liked how even some of the random encounters and "grunt" patrols all had unique spells or items and small stories ("the female and male patrols are competitive").

Its this kind of attention to detail you don't see so often in modern modules anymore.

mistere29

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Welcome Melkor:)*
>
> *If you want to give the LA system a test, go on over to www.lejendary.com and download the free pdf that is available there, "LA Quickstart Rules." It is a complete product, with instructions, rules, six pre-generated Avatar characters, and a good adventure for the Lejend master to run.*
>
> *Now back to pipulating an underground lake;)*
>
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

Last time i checked there where only 4 pregen characters.

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Whitey***
>
> *Happy GM's day.*
>
> *If anybody should get special kind wishes today, it's you - and if there's anybody who can really answer this question, it's you.*
> *Beyond 'everybody has a good time', what would you say are the five most important elements of a dungeon/campaign/quest? You should answer that as broadly or specifically as you like.*
> *It'll give us something to think about here while we're waiting on Castle Zagyg.*

Hi Whitey,

Rather than have you wait for about three years, the likely toime the last part of *Castle Zagyg* will be published, I'll take a stab at the five elements that make a game session enjoyable:

1. Good personal relationships between all the participants.
2. Subject matter that interests the whole group.
3. Able GMing, including animated participationby that one.
4. Able play, role-assumption, and roleplaying by the players.
5. A sense of danger from the environment, but knowledge that clever play will likely overcome all hazards,
6. In-game reward for characters played successfully in the scenario,
7. Shared recounting of the adventure at its conclusion.
8. A conclusion that opens the portal to yet more exciting possibilities for play.

There, I went you three better:)

Gary

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **solomanii***

I just finished re-reading Descent into the Depths of the Earth. One thing I really like about GG modules is the unbelievable attention to the treasure. Not sure if you customised each one or if its all random, but I love the little touches. Instead of saying 1 Diamond and 400pp we get 143pp, 29gp and a delicate brooch shaped like a small spider.

Did you do this on purpose or was it random?

I also liked how even some of the random encounters and "grunt" patrols all had unique spells or items and small stories ("the female and male patrols are competitive").

Its this kind of attention to detail you don't see so often in modern modules anymore.

Greetings Solomanii,

To cut to the chase, I decide upon the treasure found in an encounter as I write it. Nothing more random involved than my mental processes.

At times I skimp on that part of things because my attention is centered on description of the area, the creatures or traps therein, what will happen to PCs when they interact with those things. In many cases, though, O'll go back and polish an important encounter area, and at that point detail things sich as, "There is a small coffer of tortoise shell hidden in the secret compartment. The box is bound in gold and set with carved red coral clasped in a center mounting of that metal. this carving depicting a curled Oriental dragon, the pearl it holds in its five-taloned claw an actual black seed pearl."

Heh,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

Last time i checked there where only 4 pregen characters.

Right you are, and my bad;)

I was thinking of an introductory module I had written that had six pre-generated Avatars in it.

Four ain't shabby, though,as two of them are activators--spell-casters.

Gary

VirgilCaine

Mr. Gygax, it is an honor and a pleasure to speak with you.

Do you prefer "high" or "low" magic campaigns?

What is your favorite character class to play?

Do you keep up with what Wizards of the Coast is doing with Dungeons and Dragons?

After all this time, do you have a favorite monster you enjoy pitting your PCs against?

Thank you.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **VirgilCaine***

Mr. Gygax, it is an honor and a pleasure to speak with you.

Do you prefer "high" or "low" magic campaigns?

Howdy!

Depends on the campaign, but i generally have magic available somewhere in the middle, and as PCs get higherin level, amke it more available to them as they face more challenging opponents.

Quote:

What is your favorite character class to play?

I mainly play a skill-based system these days, but when playing a class-based one I don't ming any of the main classes--fighter, mage, illusionist, cleric, druid, thief, ranger, or some combination of those if playing a demi-human. The last new PC I created was a gnome illusionist thief.

Quote:

Do you keep up with what Wizards of the Coast is doing with Dungeons and Dragons?

No.

Quote:

After all this time, do you have a favorite monster you enjoy pitting your PCs against?

Heh, the one i am pitting against the group playing is my favorite of the moment, or else one I am making up to surprise everybody;)

Cheers,
Gary

Thank you.[/QUOTE]

Page 5 of 11 · First · ◀ · 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 11 ▶ · Last ▶▶

Gary Gygax Q&A: part VI
Printable View

ScottGLXIX   Friday, 5th March, 2004, 12:53 AM

Greetings Colonel, I have a follow up to the spell casting and initiative question you answered above. When attacking a spell caster, the DMG gives two methods for determing if the attack or the spell occur first, either the segment indicated by the initiative roll, or a method based on speed factor. What about in situations where the attacker has multiple attack routines, like an archer, or a fighter with two attacks? Will the first attack occur first regardless of casting time, or does the spell caster have the normal chance of getting his spell off before the first attack occurs? Scott

---

Col_Pladoh   Friday, 5th March, 2004, 12:57 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX**
>
> Greetings Colonel, I have a follow up to the spell casting and initiative question you answered above. When attacking a spell caster, the DMG gives two methods for determing if the attack or the spell occur first, either the segment indicated by the initiative roll, or a method based on speed factor. What about in situations where the attacker has multiple attack routines, like an archer, or a fighter with two attacks? Will the first attack occur first regardless of casting time, or does the spell caster have the normal chance of getting his spell off before the first attack occurs? Scott

Hi Scott:)

A spell-casted loosing a one-segment spell such as magic missile is pretty hard to stop. All of my mage PCs have spells of one segment casting time for tight situations,

The physical attack must occur on the segment before a spell is cast to disrupt it--unless concentration is required to keep the spell going. Multiple attacks don't matter, as the first happens on the segment of the round indicated, then another follows thereafter. So if the first of multiple attacks occurs before the spell is cast, and it hits, that's the one that matters most. Of course the second attack might be even more important, such as one that kills the spell-caster...

Cheers,
Gary

---

mistere29   Friday, 5th March, 2004, 02:37 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> Right you are, and my bad;)
>
> I was thinking of an introductory module I had written that had six pre-generated Avatars in it.
>
> Four ain't shabby, though,as two of them are activators--spell-casters.
>
> Gary

Yeah but the other 2 are basically fighters. 2 more rougish types would have been a good idea. That would cover most of the basic types people like to play

---

Col_Pladoh   Friday, 5th March, 2004, 03:18 PM

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **mistere29**
>
> Yeah but the other 2 are basically fighters. 2 more rougish types would have been a good idea. That would cover most of the basic types people like to play

Yes, a Noble Order human and a Dwarf Soldier Order for their combat capacity--the encounters demand some heavy fighting. The beauty of the LA game system is that the player is not confined to a stereotype, so rougish activity can be accomplished as desired, skills facilitating that oicked up so as to enhance that aspect. However, in the adventure presented, such Avatars wouldn't be a lot of use.

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX   Friday, 5th March, 2004, 04:08 PM

Quote:

Thanks Gary! The good news is, that was the last question I had for the AD&D rules. The bad news is, I just started playing DJ and LA, so that's two more systems I have to learn.
Scott

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***

Thanks Gary! The good news is, that was the last question I had for the AD&D rules. The bad news is, I just started playing DJ and LA, so that's two more systems I have to learn.
Scott

Whoa!

Talk about the opposite ends of the skill-based RPG...

MythusMage will likely be delighted to expound on the DJ game whenever you present the opportunity.

The place for LA game discussion is over at www.lejendary.com or on www.dragonsfoot.org in the LA game section there;) You can download a free pdf at either website, The LA Quickstart Rules."

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX

Quote:

GT has been very helpful on the DJ side. I have some players rolling up HPs for Unhallowed tonight.
I'll probably wait until the TLG release to start the the LA game, but I might run the advenure included with the quick start rules before then.
Scott

Col_Pladoh

Yuppers Scott,

Greg knows his DJ rules very well. Creating HPs takes a while until you get used to it. I got so I could do a dozen in a day, but now I don't need to work so hard, because the LA game is far easier;)

Sometime I'll tell you about the long campaign of Unhallowed I ran, how the whole player group failed to comprehend the purpose of their HPs' mission and thus ended up by being devoured by a demon. I hated it:(

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Sometime I'll tell you about the long campaign of Unhallowed I ran, how the whole player group failed to comprehend the purpose of their HPs' mission and thus ended up by being devoured by a demon. I hated it:(*
>
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

Sounds like a good story to hear while sipping some Bombay during Game Fest.
Scot

Melkor

Multi Class Saving Throws

Hi Gary,

I'm reading through the old AD&D PHB and DMG, and all these questions are popping up. I'll make this one a little less involved than my previous question.

I noticed that the DMG states that a Multi-Class character uses the "best value" of his classes on the Attack Matrix.....Is the same applied to Saving Throws ? A multiclass character uses the best value between the two classes ?

Thanks!

ScottGLXIX

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Melkor***
>
> *Hi Gary,*
>
> *I'm reading through the old AD&D PHB and DMG, and all these questions are popping up. I'll make this one a little less involved than my previous question.*
>
> *I noticed that the DMG states that a Multi-Class character uses the "best value" of his classes on the Attack Matrix.....Is the same applied to Saving Throws ? A multiclass character uses the best value between the two classes ?*
>
> *Thanks!*

Melkor, check the DMG, bottom left of p. 79, "Multi-class characters, characters with two classes, and bards check the matrix for each class possessed, and use the most favorable result for the type of attack being defended against."
Scott

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***
>
> *Sounds like a good story to hear while sipping some Bombay during Game Fest.*
> *Scot*

Right On!

If you are famliar with the KotDT strip where the GM has gone to great lengths to preppare a campaign covering everythig in the LotR setting, and the first thing the PCS do is to "waste Gandalf," you'll get the general tenor of what happened in the campaign I had prepared, but my players did it at the very end of things. High hopes crushed...

More in July then:)

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Hi Melkor:)

ScottGLXIX covered the question you had perfectly. Indeed, the most favorable number is used by those PCs with more than one possible for attacks and/or saving throws.

Cheers,
Gary

Sir Elton

Gaming and Politics

I'm putting the two together in this post. Sue me! :cool: :]

Mr. Gygax,

I've been thinking on the benefits of D&D, and I've decided to turn RPG Activist for a while. I'm thinking that the benefits of playing RPGs are highly overlooked by the Education Establishment thanks to Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons (BADD!). In fact, you're welcome to read my essay. :D

I've even gone a step further, and I'm translating the myth of the Agronautica into an actual adventure module intended for kids. I'd like to know your opinion on this matter.

Yours,
Elton Robb

MerricB

G'day Gary!

Recently on RJK's boards you mentioned that Jeff Perren was initiating legal action against WotC for their use of Chainmail, since was never bought out (like you were).

What is that about? Is that to do with the Chainmail ESD? Or with the d20 Chainmail miniature game?

Has it been resolved yet?

Cheers!

O Brasileiro

Hello again, Master.
This one is about the old D&D TV show (we had that for 20 years here in Brasil). Did someone really wrote any "official" last episode? If so, can you talk something about it?

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***
>
> *I'm putting the two together in this post. Sue me! :cool: :]*
>
> *Mr. Gygax,*
>
> *I've been thinking on the benefits of D&D, and I've decided to turn RPG Activist for a while. I'm thinking that the benefits of playing RPGs are highly overlooked by the Education Establishment thanks to Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons (BADD!). In fact, you're welcome to read my essay. :D*

From the correspondence i have received from gamers, I have no doubt that there are many positive benefits associated with participation in RPGs. I ran a survey on my website asking if the RPG was positive, neutral, or negative in regards several aspects of their life--social, educational, and work. Over half said highly positive, over a quarter said moderately positive, about 10% siad that gaming had no effect, and less than 5% had negatives regarding it, uners 1% of over 1,000 responses rathe the RPG as hightly negative. Sadly, the poll results were lost in a server crash.

Back around 1980 I directed TSR to advertise in professional educators' perioricals asking for the reader to registed with the company if ther were intersted in learning about RPG modules designed for classroom instruction, We received over 3,000 requests. In the course of this we hires a Ph.D in Educational Psychology to assist with the creation of the modules. Just as we were ready to begin prodiction, the Blumes canned the project:(

BADD was a bad joke. The woman who attempted to exploit the organization she founded had to drop it, ended up being an "expert" speaking to small town police departments on the "dangers" of RPGs and Satanism.

I'd appreciate receiving a copy of your essay.

> Quote:
>
> *I've even gone a step further, and I'm translating the myth of the Agronautica into an actual adventure module intended for kids. I'd like to know your opinion on this matter.*
>
> *Yours,*
> *Elton Robb*

My opinion is that your efforts are well-founded. I wish you great success.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **MerricB**
>
> G'day Gary!
>
> Recently on RJK's boards you mentioned that Jeff Perren was initiating legal action against WotC for their use of Chainmail, since was never bought out (like you were).
>
> What is that about? Is that to do with the Chainmail ESD? Or with the d20 Chainmail miniature game?
>
> Has it been resolved yet?
>
> Cheers!

Hi Merric!

Sorry, but I have only second-hand knowledge of the matter. Someone phoned me on behalf of Jeff to inquire about some technical matters.

That's all I know, and the nature of the suit and any resolution is known only to the parties concerned.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **O Brasileiro**
>
> Hello again, Master.
> This one is about the old D&D TV show (we had that for 20 years here in Brasil). Did someone really wrote any "official" last episode? If so, can you talk something about it?

Ciao O Brasileiro,

Yes, a 27th episode concluding the D&D Cartooon Show series was written by Michael Reaves. He had is posted on his websute for some time, but I don't know if it's still up. It was IMO the best-written of all the scripts.

Just FYI, the concluding script was ordered by Marvel because we had reached an agreement regarding a spin-off show. The new series would have been aimed at an older audience, had the main characters from the original--no Bobby or Uni--being more self-reliant, the magic items no longer there. One script for the new series had been approved by me, and others were being written when the TSR difficulties arose. When Lorraine Williams informed Marvel that they would no longer be dealing with me, Marvel and CBS decided to drop the project...

Cheers,
Gary

MerricB

Heh - so by the time I heard the story, it was at least fourth-hand! (Jeff told someone who told you who told someone who told me... ;))

Not a problem, Gary. Thanks for the info.

Another question, this one LA related!

In D&D, there's a fairly big difference between 1st and 9th level characters in their power levels; what sort of difference is there between inexperienced and experienced Avatars in LA? (Inexperienced being starting out, of course, and experienced being those who have been played for a year or two).

Would you say that it's a flatter progression in abilities? Similar? Greater?

Cheers!

Col_Pladoh

Sunday, 7th March, 2004, 03:32 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **MerricB***
>
> *Heh - so by the time I heard the story, it was at least fourth-hand! (Jeff told someone who told you who told someone who told me... ;))*
>
> *Not a problem, Gary. Thanks for the info.*

You are most welcome, amigo:)

> Quote:
>
> *Another question, this one LA related!*
>
> *In D&D, there's a fairly big difference between 1st and 9th level characters in their power levels; what sort of difference is there between inexperienced and experienced Avatars in LA? (Inexperienced being starting out, of course, and experienced being those who have been played for a year or two).*
>
> *Would you say that it's a flatter progression in abilities? Similar? Greater?*
>
> *Cheers!*

It is difficult to draw parallels between the class-level systems and the LA game's skill-bundle base, but...

The beginning Avatar is possibly like a PC of around 5th or 6th level in capacity, settingaside player accumen, of course. Advancement is slow, gains are generally 1% in one Ability (skill-bundle) per play episode of four hours of active participation. As a new Avatar starts out with five Abilities, and there are a total of 34, the player will need a good deal of time to be highlt able in the initial areas and round out the Avatar with new Abilities.

Starting scores for Abilities for a human Avatar are in this general range:
1st: 55-60
2nd: 40-45
3rd: 30-35
4th: 20-25
5th: 10

The revised edition of the game, and the primer version coming from TLG will have a paragraph or two advising how to start play with less-potent Avatars, so as to approach the lesser capacity of new class and level-based systems.

Cheers,
Gary

Sir Elton

Sunday, 7th March, 2004, 03:40 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Back around 1980 I directed TSR to advertise in professional educators' perioricals asking for the reader to registed with the company if ther were intersted in learning about RPG modules designed for classroom instruction, We received over 3,000 requests. In the course of this we hires a Ph.D in Educational Psychology to assist with the creation of the modules. Just as we were ready to begin prodiction, the Blumes canned the project:(*
>
> *I'd appreciate receiving a copy of your essay.*
>
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

Then I'll send a copy of the Final your way before I make a decision on sending it to GAMA or Pyramid. :D

Col_Pladoh

Sunday, 7th March, 2004, 06:48 PM

Okay Sir Elton!

When I get the ms. copy I'll read and pass along any critique I might have.

Cheers,

Gary

solomanii

Do you use a DM Shield or do you just let the players see all your rolls and whatever they can glean from your notes?

solomanii

And another question that just occured to me quoting you;

"That meant that their cleric would be dedicated to Boccob, and
the fighters and others, wanting the benefits of clerical ministrations
came along for the ride Boccob was never an active deity in play, and none
of the PCs was eager to have Zagyg intervene..."

So did the clerics not help party memebers of different beliefs?

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **solomanii***
>
> *Do you use a DM Shield or do you just let the players see all your rolls and whatever they can glean from your notes?*

Cheers Solomanii,

I seldom use a screen, but I don't leave notes in view of the players--themap sometimes, but not other written material.

Your second post siad:

> Quote:
>
> *And another question that just occured to me quoting you;*
>
> *"That meant that their cleric would be dedicated to Boccob, and
> the fighters and others, wanting the benefits of clerical ministrations
> came along for the ride Boccob was never an active deity in play, and none
> of the PCs was eager to have Zagyg intervene..."*
>
> *So did the clerics not help party memebers of different beliefs?*

Yes, clerics of deities not honored by someone needing assistance were generally aided, but at the cost of a "donation" to advance the work of the particylar faith of the cleric.

The main fun was having clerics of different dieties argue theology, and debates between one of St. Cuthbert and another of Pholtus always ended up in a test of which would prevail by a bonk on the head or temporary blinding. The players had a good sense of humor :uhoh:

Gary

Gray Mouser

Colonel,

I was wondering about your own early forays into roleplaying. When I started out (as a wee lad of probably 10 ir so - the memory is the first thing to go!) I remember going through several PC's before being able to have one survive for any length of time! (Hey, I was young! Run into the goblin lair with swords brandished was the height of strategy for the first couple of adventures! And damn the Minotaur in KotB!) Anyway, me and my friends had a habit of rolling up characters as soon as possible after the orihginals died. Usually we would just stick with the same name and add "the seond," "the third," etc. Sometimes we wouldn't even bother with that and just had a line of "Borg the Fighter" over the course of the adventure.

My question is this: Did you experience the same sort of thing when starting out? I'm sure since you were older and an experienced wargamer there would be a *major* difference at least in rate of PC death, but I'm wondering if, for instance, the famous Mordenkainen or Yrag, et. al. are all originals or if he's actually "Mordenkainen III." ;-)

Gray Mouser

Manzanita

DMG I question

Hey Gary. It's Grant. You've answered a couple of my questions before. It's so much fun having you around. Here's another question I've had for decades & it just occured to me that I could ask you.

In the original DMG (which I still have and use) it has a sample combat on page 71. In this, Arlanni the theif uses a crossbow, and Balto the monk uses a sword, both of which were prohibited to those classes at the time. The mistakes seem so egregious that I can't believe they were just an accident. Were you experimenting with different rules at the time? It was a good combat none the less. Was it based on an actual DnD event?

thanks,

Grant

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser**
>
> Colonel,
>
> ...
>
> My question is this: Did you experience the same sort of thing when starting out? I'm sure since you were older and an experienced wargamer there would be a major difference at least in rate of PC death, but I'm wondering if, for instance, the famous Mordenkainen or Yrag, et. al. are all originals or if he's actually "Mordenkainen III." ;-)
>
> Gray Mouser

I never lost any of my main PCs, although most of them "died" at least once and were resurrected or wished back to life by their fellow adventurers. Even though I was over 30 then I did now and again get a bit rash. Once when the DM was really lousy, Yrag threw himself on his sword in disgust. Murlynd, Robilar, Tenser, and Terik brought his corpse back and had him resurrected...with another person as the DM :lol:

A fighter PC of mine in Brian Blume's campaign with a natural 18 strength, 17 constitution and 16 dexterity was killed before getting to 2nd level, lost and gone forever :(The same is true of a half-orc cleric-assassin PC of mine, but he got to 3rd level before biting the dust.

Cheers,
Gary

Gray Mouser

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> Even though I was over 30 then I did now and again get a bit rash. Once when the DM was really lousy, Yrag threw himself on his sword in disgust. Murlynd, Robilar, Tenser, and Terik brought his corpse back and had him resurrected...with another person as the DM :lol:

:lol: :lol: :lol:

That's classic!

Hey! BTW, who played Murlynd? I'm assuming the PC version is different than the Quasi-Deity found in the Greyhawk Glossography.

Gray Mouser

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Manzanita**
>
> Hey Gary. It's Grant. You've answered a couple of my questions before. It's so much fun having you around. Here's another question I've had for decades & it just occured to me that I could ask you.

Hi Grant,

My pleasure to be posting here. I enjoy the fellowship!

Quote:

> In the original DMG (which I still have and use) it has a sample combat on page 71. In this, Arlanni the theif uses a crossbow, and Balto the monk uses a sword, both of which were prohibited to those classes at the time. The mistakes seem so egregious that I can't believe they were just an accident. Were you experimenting with different rules at the time? It was a good combat none the less. Was it based on an actual DnD event?
>
> thanks,
> Grant

To the best of my knowledge and belief, that particular example was added by the editors, thus slipped past and never got corrected.

From my current standpoint I would allow the thief to use a hand crossbow, and with magic swords reduced in power, open the use of that weapon to clerics, no specialization, of course. However, that ain't OAD&D.

Cheers,
Gary

sluggo the sleazebag

Hello again Gary,

I have to echo Manzanita's sentiments when I say that it's great to have you on the boards. You've always been very prompt, humorous, and forthcoming in your responses and I think it sets a great example for the rest of the gaming community.

Anyway, I have a few more questions for you...

I'm curious how you handle alignment infractions in your game. Do you use an honor point system like the one in Oriental Adventures or do you keep your cards pretty close to your chest, choosing not to inform the players and simply let their actions (or lack thereof) inform them of the alignment shift? If you tell them, how do you go about letting the players know? Is it an out-of-game thing or do they find out the hard way while attempting to cast spells?

My second question deals with the glory days of AD&D. I've read many of the questions people throw at you about the old modules, but I can't recall anyone asking this one, so here goes: What do you think is your most under-rated AD&D module? How about the most under-rated AD&D module by another author? Also, what about more recent stuff? Are there any modules out there that appeal to your gaming sensibilities?

Lastly, what are your thoughts on Rob Kuntz's upcoming, updated Maure Castle? I seem to remember you mentioning in a Dragon article that your characters never explored the lower-levels (something about petrification and a hasty teleport?), so I'm curious if you'll be having a second go at the unfinished adventure. As an aside, do you think this could be Rob's way of bringing Mordenkainen out of retirement?

Sincerely and respectfully,

Sluggo

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 9th March, 2004, 01:39 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **sluggo the sleazebag***
>
> *Hello again Gary,*
>
> *I have to echo Manzanita's sentiments when I say that it's great to have you on the boards. You've always been very prompt, humorous, and forthcoming in your responses and I think it sets a great example for the rest of the gaming community.*

Hi Sluggo!

Happy to be here, for these boards are about the best there are on the net. the only place where I have about as many posts as I do here is at the main LA game community boards.

> Quote:
>
> *Anyway, I have a few more questions for you...*
>
> *I'm curious how you handle alignment infractions in your game. Do you use an honor point system like the one in Oriental Adventures or do you keep your cards pretty close to your chest, choosing not to inform the players and simply let their actions (or lack thereof) inform them of the alignment shift? If you tell them, how do you go about letting the players know? Is it an out-of-game thing or do they find out the hard way while attempting to cast spells?*

I manage that in my head, keep no notes. A player blatently playing a character out of exprerssed alignment is informed of that fact quite publicly before ther group. I believe that is correct, as the DM sereves as the senses for all PCs. The group would certainly notice such behavior. If alignment infraction is clandestine, then I inform the player that the character is drifting towards whatever different alignment his actions indicate. Of course only clerics would discover such change when attanpting to cast a spell ot regain one that was cast or a new one.

> Quote:
>
> *My second question deals with the glory days of AD&D. I've read many of the questions people throw at you about the old modules, but I can't recall anyone asking this one, so here goes: What do you think is your most under-rated AD&D module? How about the most under-rated AD&D module by another author? Also, what about more recent stuff? Are there any modules out there that appeal to your gaming sensibilities?*

That's a tough question, for I actually enjoyed writing and DMing all the modules in question. *Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* comes to mind. Also the whimsy in *Dungeonland,* a module that was great fun if approached in a light-hearted manner.

As for other author's modules I can not say, as I have played only a handful, What with writing game rules and modules, running my campaign, and managing bisiness affairs, my playing time was curtailed severely around the time modules began to proliferate. By then I was playing a goodly number of other RPGs to test them or because they offered a refershing inspirational change from pure fantasy.

> Quote:
>
> *Lastly, what are your thoughts on Rob Kuntz's upcoming, updated Maure Castle? I seem to remember you mentioning in a Dragon article that your characters never explored the lower-levels (something about petrification and a hasty teleport?), so I'm curious if you'll be having a second go at the unfinished adventure. As an aside, do you think this could be Rob's way of bringing Mordenkainen out of retirement?*

It will be interesting to see the material when Rob finishes it. He and are will soon be collaborating in the *Castle Zagyg* modules, the material from my original campaign which he co-DMed with me after the first year or so it was running. As that will keep us busy for two years or so, I don't know how much time there'll be to adventure in Castle Maure, but Mordie would enjoy blowing up lost of stuff there for sure;)

It is likely that Rob and I will be co-GMing at least one group of players in an adventure using the *Castle Zagyg* base setting at Milwaukee Gamefest this July. The C&C Rules from Troll Lord Games being used for the material, that should pretty well duplicate OAD&D play. The year after we can likely do the same for the upper levels of the dungeon, and in 2006 the whole of the dungeon complex.

Cheerio,
Gary

Henry

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *The year after we can likely do the same for the upper levels of the dungeon, and in 2006 the whole of the dungeon complex.*
>
> *Cheerio,*
> *Gary*

2006 before we see Castle Zagyg?

I should have you know Gary, that after waiting 21 years for that material, if anything untoward befalls you in the next two years, I fully intend on Resurrecting you. :p

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Henry***
>
> *2006 before we see Castle Zagyg?*
>
> *I should have you know Gary, that after waiting 21 years for that material, if anything untoward befalls you in the next two years, I fully intend on Resurrecting you. :p*

Heh...

Thought about that as I recalled:

The tusks that clashed in mighty brawls of mastadons are billiard balls.
The sword of Charlemagne the Just is ferrous oxide known as rust.
Great Ghengis Khan and all his band now help to fertilize the land.
The grizzly bear whose potent hug was feared by all is now a rug.
While Caesar's bust is on the shelf, and I don't feel so well myself.

However...

The campaign base setting, *Yggsburgh,* is nearly ready for turnover. it is an area of about 1,500 square miles, expandable by the GM to around twice that size by using the map provided and descriptive text. the smaller size is to make inclusion on the campaign world easier. The settng includes a well-detailed town of 20K plus population, with history, political, military, social, and economic information, plus several smaller communities, all manner of geographical features with details and encounters and/or adventure hooks, and five dungeon-like areas, the third of which I should be detailing right now :uhoh:

Rob is working on the second part now, a dungeon-like area that introduces the Mad Archmage before he attained deital prowess. The original material for the castle and dungeon levels beneath it will be revised and detailed using the old maps and encounter notes. that is the most difficult part of the prohect, as we will have to work from my model of 13 levels, that expanded ro about 20 by me, then to over 40 when Rob joined forces with me as co-DM. Our mission is to keep the number of levels presented to a reasonable quantity while covering all the major places and features of the original models.

This will require approximately five above ground maps and 25 below ground ones. Maybe two years to execute the lot is a tad optomistic...

Cheers,
Gary

Bulldogc

hey gary thanks for the great game. i got a quick question for u
the monks ability to dodge missiles, would that also apply to large rocks tossed by giants?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Bulldogc***
>
> *hey gary thanks for the great game. i got a quick question for u*
> *the monks ability to dodge missiles, would that also apply to large rocks tossed by giants?*

Hi Billdogc,

Oddly, that's a question that has not ever been asked of me before, and one that I haven't considered until now. I'll "think in print" now:

A boulder hurled by a giant is centainly a missile. While a lot more deadly than an arrow, it is larger, not traveling as fast, so it can be seen more easily. It isn't so large as to preclude moving outside its path or area of impact.

Now my amswer. Yes, a monk can dodge a boulder hurled by a gaint, or one from a catapult for that matter. This assumes that the monk is watching and sees the missile coming at him.

Cheers,
Gary

Gray Mouser

Colonel,

I recently reread the Gord the Rogue series of novels (quite good, btw although I need "City of Hawks" and "Dance of Demons" to complete my collection). I really enjoyed them, especially for the image of Greyhawk and Oerth that they give the reader. However, one thing has bugged me for low these many years:

How did you come up with the name "Gord" for the main protagonist?

Don't get me wrong, I like the character and think he portrays a thief character rather well. It's just that every so often I get the urge to refer to him as "Pumpkin." :) No offense intended!

Gray Mouser

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***
>
> *Colonel,*
>
> *I recently reread the Gord the Rogue series of novels (quite good, btw although I need "City of Hawks" and "Dance of Demons" to complete my collection). I really enjoyed them, especially for the image of Greyhawk and Oerth that they give the reader. However, one thing has bugged me for low these many years:*
>
> *How did you come up with the name "Gord" for the main protagonist?*
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> *Don't get me wrong, I like the character and think he portrays a thief character rather well. It's just that every so often I get the urge to refer to him as "Pumpkin." :) No offense intended!*
>
> *Gray Mouser*

Heh!

Mouser, I didn't name him Gourd now, did I?

Joking aside, I pondered what to call an orphan left with no name and raised by a vile old harridan. Then it came to me. She just called him "boy" most of the time, but when she was irritated or angry she would thump him on his head and say "gourd," as if he was as stupid as a vegetable. So the poor lad assumed that name, but as "Gord" as in short for Gordon, perhaps.

Leena was a really rotten human being...

Cheers,
Gary

JohnRTroy

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***
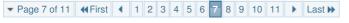>
> *Colonel,*
> *How did you come up with the name "Gord" for the main protagonist?*
> *Gray Mouser*

That's actually a plot point covered in City of Hawks, so I doubt Gary would want to spoil that for you.

Oops, look like I posted just as Gary did. D'oh!

Col_Pladoh

Saturday, 13th March, 2004, 08:14 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **JohnRTroy**
>
> That's actually a plot point covered in City of Hawks, so I doubt Gary would want to spoil that for you.
>
> Oops, look like I posted just as Gary did. D'oh!

Hi JRT!

Not much of a plot point, actually, more a detail of how wretched Gord's life was as a foundling. Knowing how he got his name doesn't reveal the plot of the *City of Hawks* story;)

Ciao,
Gary

Gray Mouser

Saturday, 13th March, 2004, 08:28 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> Hi JRT!
>
> Not much of a plot point, actually, more a detail of how wretched Gord's life was as a foundling. Knowing how he got his name doesn't reveal the plot of the City of Hawks story;)
>
> Ciao,
> Gary

Ahh, just another reason for me to complete my set of the books, however. I knew there had to be a reason just couldn't think of what it was.

I'll have to peruse amazon.com and see what I can scare up.

Thanks again!

Gray Mouser

Sir Elton

Wednesday, 17th March, 2004, 03:17 PM

Gary,

I wondering about the nation of Khemet for *Necropolis*, or a D&D game on Egypt in general. All three kingdoms seems like a good setting for Adventure, but which Kingdom: New, Middle, or Old, would you prefer adventuring in?

ScottGLXIX

Wednesday, 17th March, 2004, 06:53 PM

Hey Gary. A debate on the rate of fire of missile weapons during surpise has recently come up on several message boards I frequent.
The rule as written states that missile fire is 3 times the normal rate. This equates to 6 arrows, or 9 darts in a single segment.
I've always believed that the original intent of the rule got diluted somewhere between author and editor (similar to falling damage) and that the rate of fire should be a standard 3 per segment, but certain weapons, like a heavy crossbow, require special consideration, and must be handled on a case by case basis.
Scott

Gray Mouser

Thursday, 18th March, 2004, 12:21 AM

Colonel,

I recently had the opportunity to get all the OD&D books in pdf format! (Yee-ha!, btw. That **really** takes me back!). In these books I noticed that you use the Lawful-Neutral-Chaotic alignment system. I've heard from other people that when you first began designing AD&D (circa the MM) there were only 5 alignments (LG, CG, N, GE and LE) and that the other 4 were added in when you began working on the PHB.

When did you move from the L-N-C alignments to adding the Good/Eveil component? And when did it become the full-blown 9 alignment system that was the end result?

Thanks!

Gray Mouser

ErichDragon

Gary,

I wanted to let you know that I ran "The Keep on the Borderlands" this weekend for some visiting friends and it was every bit as enjoyable for us in our 30's as it was when we were 12.

I am sure this is an obscure question, but there are three small letter 'g's marked on the Caves of Chaos map. One, in the orc cave is a guard post, but I can't find any reference for the other two. I had never noticed it in 20 years of owning/running that module until this weekend, strange.

Thanks for the great hobby.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **ErichDragon***
>
> *Gary,*
>
> *I wanted to let you know that I ran "The Keep on the Borderlands" this weekend for some visiting friends and it was every bit as enjoyable for us in our 30's as it was when we were 12.*
>
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>
> *Thanks for the great hobby.*

Hail!

Thanks for passing that along. When I wrote B2 i aimed at providing an exciting scenario for as wide a range of DMs and players as I possibly could. That you and your friends enjoyed it as much after 20 odd years time between adventuring in the module means that the mark I aimed at was hit well.

As for the lower case g's on the map, my recollection was that all three indicated guard posts. I do not have the module before me, so I could be in error...but I don't think so;)

Cheers,
Gary

LordHavok

Hi Gary,
I skimmed through the questions and I hope this hasn't been asked before, but I was wondering. In all your years gaming, (please don't take that wrong.. :D) have you ever had a session where the people playing got really angry or even argumentative, either with you or each other? And if so how was it handled, what happened afterwards, etc. I'm curious because it's happened in a game I played in before.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **LordHavok***
>
> *Hi Gary,*
> *I skimmed through the questions and I hope this hasn't been asked before, but I was wondering. In all your years gaming, (please don't take that wrong.. :D) have you ever had a session where the people playing got really angry or even argumentative, either with you or each other? And if so how was it handled, what happened afterwards, etc. I'm curious because it's happened in a game I played in before.*

Salut LordHavok,

That hasn't occurred in any RPG I have GMed. Not that some players might not have felt like angrily disputing with me, but I have a certain force of presence and am an authority figure, so...

I have played in a group that grew angry with the GM, also where some players grew annoyed with others of the group. No mayhem broke out in any of those cases, but some players were so disgusted with events that theyquit the game. I was personally irritated by some young players having their PCs doing foolish things during a dungeon crawl, and I silently debated whether or not my own character should fry the lot with a lightning bolt. but I bit the bullet and was a good sport.

Rules arguments were fairly common when playing military miniatures and even board wargames. Been in many a dispute with the referee in a minis game or with an opponent in a boradgame. A good group or opponent will be calm and rational, so that the point of contention can be settled in relatively short order, where necessary a house rule established, and play continue.

Cheers,
Gary

LordHavok

Greetings and Salutations Gary,

Yeah I have gotten annoyed a time or two myself, but I actually was in a session one time where two of the DM's stepbrothers got into a physical altercation over one character pick pocketing the other. Push came to shove, curse to curse, finally the DM reached over and took both guys sheets and proceeded to ripping them up. As he did he said "Okay a fly craps on both of your characters heads and does 10,000 hp damage" as for you two, you can't play anymore.

I thought I'd never stop laughing.

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **LordHavok***
>
> *Greetings and Salutations Gary,*
>
> *Yeah I have gotten annoyed a time or two myself, but I actually was in a session one time where two of the DM's stepbrothers got into a physical altercation over one character pick pocketing the other. Push came to shove, curse to curse, finally the DM reached over and took both guys sheets and proceeded to ripping them up. As he did he said "Okay a fly craps on both of your characters heads and does 10,000 hp damage" as for you two, you can't play anymore.*
>
> *I thought I'd never stop laughing.*

Two brothers playing *Chainmail* miniatures back around 1972 that got into an argument like that. They ended up whacking each other with the dowels we used for measuring cannon fire. Their dispute took them out of the basement where we had the sand table set up, so we simply told them later that both were banned from gaming with the group for two weeks. They argued with each other thereafter but never came to blows again.

Cheers,
Gary

LordHavok

Crying shame huh? I guess some people don't realize what RPG's are about. Relaxation and a chance to spend time together as either family or friends...or even to make friends and possible family.

One other question if you don't mind Gary.

What did you think about the D&D movie?

(okay 2 questions)

It's generally assumed by many that most RPGers are young to college age, but do you have an estimate, or have you ever read about the number of players (lets say of D&D) there are over age 50?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **LordHavok***
>
> *Crying shame huh? I guess some people don't realize what RPG's are about. Relaxation and a chance to spend time together as either family or friends...or even to make friends and possible family.*

Ho, M'Lord!

Most regular groups are indeed comradely and appreciate the chance for fellowship that the game sessions offer. I've had many an email and personal conversation regarding that matter, the lasting friendships arising from gaming, and even a few happy marriages.

> Quote:
>
> *One other question if you don't mind Gary.*
>
> *What did you think about the D&D movie?*

Were it a pure fantasy film it would have been laughably campy. As it pretended to be something else. it was a wretched disaster. The special effects were fair. Nothing else in the whole film was up to that measure, fair. the sets were marginal. The plot, script, direction, acting, and costumes were awful.

> Quote:
>
> *(okay 2 questions)*
>
> *It's generally assumed by many that most RPGers are young to college age, but do you have an estimate, or have you ever read about the number of players (lets say of D&D) there are over age 50?*

Getting accurate data for the RPG audience is virtually impossible bacause the majority of participants are not magazine subscribers nor active

online. The players that are in those two categories can be measured, but they represent only about 10% of players, the hard-core fans.

My gut feeling in regards to players age 50 and over is that they represent no more than about 5% of the total audience, and that's likely generous. Although the median age of RPGers is certainly older now than it was in 1980--young players are not coming into the hobby in the numbers they did then, which is bad, and WotC should be spending money to recruit them-the age creep is probably towards a median age of 30+ rather than the former average of 20+.

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX   Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 02:52 PM

Gary, you missed several questions towards the bottom of the last page from the March 16th and 17th date range.
Scott

Col_Pladoh   Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 04:46 PM

Thanks Scott!

I didn't get any email notice of them. I'll go have a look-see now;)

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh   Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 04:54 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***
>
> *Gary,*
>
> *I wondering about the nation of Khemet for Necropolis, or a D&D game on Egypt in general. All three kingdoms seems like a good setting for Adventure, but which Kingdom: New, Middle, or Old, would you prefer adventuring in?*

Hi SirElton,

Sorry to have missed this post until now.

Using Khemit from *Necropolis* and the *Epic of Aerth* world setting is likely a lot less work for the DM that building something from the historical Old, Middle, or New Kingdom models. For a Conan-like milieu with appropriate rules I'd go for the Old Kingdom, while a Classical Antiquity one would fit best with the New Kingdom. That sort of leaves the Middle Kingdom out,but...

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh   Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 05:04 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***
>
> *Hey Gary. A debate on the rate of fire of missile weapons during surpise has recently come up on several message boards I frequent.*
> *The rule as written states that missile fire is 3 times the normal rate. This equates to 6 arrows, or 9 darts in a single segment.*
> *I've always believed that the original intent of the rule got diluted somewhere between author and editor (similar to falling damage) and that the rate of fire should be a standard 3 per segment, but certain weapons, like a heavy crossbow, require special consideration, and must be handled on a case by case basis.*
> *Scott*

Scott,

Another post I missed earlier:(

When that rule was written a segment of a round was six seconds long, but I can not but agree with with your assessment. Six arrows is potentailly possible, but having them arranged for such a rapid rate of fire is improbable. The same is true for nine darts. Standard rate of fire, but uninterrupted by any return, is much more logical. The same is true for special consideration on a case-by-case basis.

In all, application of comon sense needs be applied.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh   Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 05:11 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***
>
> *Colonel,*

*I recently had the opportunity to get all the OD&D books in pdf format! (Yee-ha!, btw. That **really** takes me back!). In these books I noticed that you use the Lawful-Neutral-Chaotic alignment system. I've heard from other people that when you first began designing AD&D (circa the MM) there were only 5 alignments (LG, CG, N, GE and LE) and that the other 4 were added in when you began working on the PHB.*

When did you move from the L-N-C alignments to adding the Good/Eveil component? And when did it become the full-blown 9 alignment system that was the end result?

Thanks!

Gray Mouser

Yet another missed post, and another apology from me.

When I enlarged the alignment system from the three used in D&D because chaoric does not necassarily mean evil nor lawful equate to good, I worked up the nine alignments found in OAD&D as I began work in the MM in 1976. A five-alignment system was not used by me, as the various NX slots were integral to the system I devised.

Cheers,
Gary

LordHavok

Well met Gary,

I found a copy of a wonderful book. You may have heard of it.. :D

Roleplaying Mastery.

You know you ought to do another book like that one. Maybe a update...include some tidbits you've learned since then..especially some wonderful true life stories.

By the way...Do you have a biography or autobiography out? I haven't heard of one but that's not saying much.. :D

Bulldogc

Gary I got another question for u. What was going through your mind when making the crossbow stats? Aside from the monk, there seems to be no reason at all to actually use one when even a sling is better in most respects.

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 05:23 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **LordHavok**
>
> Well met Gary,
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>
> Roleplaying Mastery.
>
> You know you ought to do another book like that one. Maybe a update...include some tidbits you've learned since then..especially some wonderful true life stories.
>
> By the way...Do you have a biography or autobiography out? I haven't heard of one but that's not saying much.. :D

Howdy!

There is a sequel to *Role Playing Mastery,* that being *Master of the Game* published a about a year later. Unfortunately is is very hard to find a copy, for I think it is a more informative book.

As for a bio, I am working on an autobiography in fits and starts, still mainly recording what I recall from hy childhood. It isn't all that much fun to write, and with my gaming-related work load being what it is I wonder if i will ever get sround to completing the bio.

Ciao,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 05:38 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Bulldogc**
>
> Gary I got another question for u. What was going through your mind when making the crossbow stats? Aside from the monk, there seems to be no reason at all to actually use one when even a sling is better in most respects.

What was going through my mind was mainly historical accounts of weapons. The crossbow was a major weapon for three reasons: they were easy to make, they could be used effectively by troops that had little training, the heavy ones could penetrate even plate armor at close range. Even the heavy crossbow was clearly inferior to the Welsh/English longbow and the heavy composite Eastern bow, and the bamboo (very) longbow of the samurai.

A sling can not be used where a flat trajectory is required, and one employing a sling must have room to swing it. The use of a sling requires a lot of training too, and specially cast tapered broinze missiles for good armor penetration. OTOH, the Incas were dropping armored Conquistadores with their egg-sized stone missiles.

Cheers,
Gary

Bulldogc

Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004, 06:00 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> What was going through my mind was mainly historical accounts of weapons. The crossbow was a major weapon for three reasons: they were easy to make, they could be used effectively by troops that had little training, the heavy ones could penetrate even plate armor at close range. Even the heavy crossbow was clearly inferior to the Welsh/English longbow and the heavy composite Eastern bow, and the bamboo (very) longbow of the samurai.
>
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>
> Cheers,
> Gary

ah, yea i guess that makes some sense just a followup to it. can a crossbow be specialy crafted to take advantage of stronger people to increase projectile damage?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Bulldogc**
>
> ah, yea i guess that makes some sense just a followup to it. can a crossbow be specialy crafted to take advantage of stronger people to increase projectile damage?

Bulldogc,

You aren't the first persn to ask me that question :o

As the heavy crossbows were all cranked or otherwise wound to :):):):) them, the answer has to be no. However...

A character with considerable strength (as the DM determines) could probably :):):):) a light crossbow without benefit of the usual lever used, so rate of fire could be increased. A very powerful character might be able to haul the string of a heavy crossbow back with a claw lever, thus firing it as rapidly as a light one.

FWIW,
Gary

PS. If those stupid smiley faces appear another time, they stay. They evidently are a computer generated editing of the word "c*o*c*k" as in what one does to ready a crossbow or firearm for immediate firing. that not to be confused with a male chicken :]

LordHavok

Greetings and Salutations Col.,

I was wondering something(s). Back in the early years (late 70's-80's), about how long did it take you to develop a typical module? By this I mean concept to production. I realize that sometimes you might have had an idea and it took awhile before it came together but this is all generally speaking. I remember back then it "seemed" like modules were coming out like crazy.

Another ? I had: Gord the Rogue. I remember reading the books years ago and was wondering if that was ever a character that you or someone else actually played? If not, where did you come up with him?

(I know..I know...that's a horrible and typical question to ask any writer. "So how do you come up with your ideas...?.. :D)

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **LordHavok**
>
> Greetings and Salutations Col.,
>
> I was wondering something(s). Back in the early years (late 70's-80's), about how long did it take you to develop a typical module? By this I mean concept to production. I realize that sometimes you might have had an idea and it took awhile before it came together but this is all generally speaking. I remember back then it "seemed" like modules were coming out like crazy.

Hi LordHavoc,

It took about a week to write B2. The G series I write when taking a break after finishing the MM, so the three were written in a pariod of about a month. Then I did the D series between finishing the PBG and beginning the DMG, about six weeks.

I didn't keep track of production time, but if you figure editing takes about a week per 32-48 printed pages, then layout and art take about a week each, you won't be far off. Printing time can run anywhere from 10 to 30 or more days.

Quote:

> Another ? I had: Gord the Rogue. I remember reading the books years ago and was wondering if that was ever a character that you or someone else actually played? If not, where did you come up with him?
>
> (I know..I know...that's a horrible and typical question to ask any writer. "So how do you come up with your ideas...?.. :D)

I made it all up out of my imagination, pure and simple. The only PCs actualy played in the yarns were Melf, played by my son Luke, and Curly Greenleaf, one of my many characters.

Cheerio,
Gary

Flyspeck23

Hi Gary,

I hope this doesn't get too personal...
What games are or have you playing regularly? IIRC you play(ed) chess, but what about other games, board or otherwise? Any wargames?
Do you play online? PBEM Chess?

Sorry if this kind of question pops up too often, but I can't find any answers ;)

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Flyspeck23**
>
> Hi Gary,
>
> I hope this doesn't get too personal...
> What games are or have you playing regularly? IIRC you play(ed) chess, but what about other games, board or otherwise? Any wargames?
> Do you play online? PBEM Chess?
> Sorry if this kind of question pops up too often, but I can't find any answers ;)

Hail Flyspeck!

Don't worry. I won't be offended by personal questions. If they are too personal I'll just ignore them, with ot without comment ;)

I have not played chess for about a year. No opponents around. I also prefer playing shogi these days.

Aside from the usual weekly campaign game of LA that I run--and we are going to alternate those sessions with C&C game ones for a time at least--the usual games played here are: *Settlers of Catan, Rail Baron,* backgammon, senat, and cribbage. We are talking about adding poker to the mix. When I get a chance I enjoy playing *Operation Overlord,* but board wargamers are scarce. We haven't played bridge for far too long a time, and I hope to get in some play this spring when some friends return to the area. There are no regular military miniatures groups hereabouts that i know of, anyway, and besides that I am usually working all weekend.

Cheers,
Gary

mystra007

Obsidian Citadel

Gary,

I was looking for plans/maps of the home of the members of the old Circle of Eight in Greyhawk (mordenkainen, bigby, rary, otto, otiluke, tenser, leomund, nystul, etc...). I did my research on the net and asked a few peoples, but all I found is the house of Bigby in "Treasures of Greyhawk". Then someone told me the best person to ask would be you since those were mainly your characters. I hope I will not offend you with this but I would really like some informations on this or references from published books where I could get some informations about those peoples homes/stronghold maps/traps/information, please :)

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **mystra007**
>
> Gary,
>
> I was looking for plans/maps of the home of the members of the old Circle of Eight in Greyhawk (mordenkainen, bigby, rary, otto, otiluke, tenser, leomund, nystul, etc...). I did my research on the net and asked a few peoples, but all I found is the house of Bigby in "Treasures of Greyhawk". Then someone told me the best person to ask would be you since those were mainly your characters. I hope I will not offend you with this but I would really like some informations on this or references from published books where I could get some informations about those peoples homes/stronghold maps/traps/information, please :)

Ho Mystra007,

The Obsidian Citadel was indeed my personal creation as a player. The eight (actually nine) main PCs of mine that occupied it were Mordenkainen, Bigby, Yrag, Rigby, Vram & Vin, Zigby, Felnorith, and Nigby. It was an octagonal castle with eight wall towers and a central keep with much space between the outer wall and the inner works because of the number of troops housed in this fortress. That's about it. I am not going to scan the maps and written text, with banner illustrations;)

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **mystra007**
>
> Gary,
>
> I was looking for plans/maps of the home of the members of the old Circle of Eight in Greyhawk (mordenkainen, bigby, rary, otto, otiluke, tenser, leomund, nystul, etc...). I did my research on the net and asked a few peoples, but all I found is the house of Bigby in "Treasures of Greyhawk". Then someone told me the best person to ask would be you since those were mainly your characters. I hope I will not offend you with this but I would really like some informations on this or references from published books where I could get some informations about those peoples homes/stronghold maps/traps/information, please :)

Mystra, if you want a little more info on Gary's original Co8, go here: http://doomsdaygames.proboards3.com/...num=1080316336
The material was written with Gary's help, and is based on the original incarnation of the group.
Scott

Sir Elton

Hi Gary,

I am pleased to report that GAMA likes my essay. David Millians had this to say about my essay:

> Quote:
>
> *I like. I like very much! You speak so well and with such clarity. I wish everyone could read it.*

My professor said it was very original in any On-line class she had taught. Yadda-yadda. If GAMA could publish it as a "Games for Education" pamphlet, we may see a small jump of the Young buying RPGs. If my essay is as well recieved as I hope it will be, we may see a stronger demand for published adventures. (HOPING HOPING HOPING!)

At least my efforts are going to be increased. I am planning a Campaign Setting based on the Roman Invasion of Britain so that Gamers can see the foundations of the Arthurian Saga. That is my brother's idea, he's an Expert on Roman Britain. Go figure. :]

If we can get RPGs to be used in the Schools again . . . :\

Col_Pladoh

Sir Elton,

You did a fine essay indeed. What you suggest regarding module demand and new players is a logical result if there is broad exposure of your article. As I mentioned to you, I was planning for TSR to create and distribute special educational modules for classroom instructors back in the early 1980s when the Blume brothers killed the idea just before launch. It still grates on me...

Cheers,
Gary

Nathal

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***
>
> *I am pleased to report that GAMA likes my essay.*

Is this essay available online?

Sir Elton

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Nathal***
>
> *Is this essay available online?*

No. Not yet. I posted the roughy here, but when the Final is available online, is pretty much up to GAMA. I hope they publish it very soon so that they can distribute it at Origins this year.

Onyx

AC vs HP

Mr. Gygax, a question regarding a fundamental of D&D that has always weighed heavy in my mind (and if it's not one you want to tackle, I understand :P).

I have always been curious as to why the apparent duplicity of Armorclass and Hitpoints exist. On the one hand we have Armorclass, a score which represents the difficulty in striking a given target with a weapon. This score is checked by an attack roll made by a given attacker, and is purly based on that character's skill (class level, etc). The Attack Roll vs Armorclass is an absolute test with only two conditional outcomes; success and failure. While the nature of this strike may be abstract in its description, the success/failure atribute is concrete.
On the other hand, we have Hitpoints. As I understand it, HPs are an abstract method of tracking and recording the wounds that a given target recieves. It is left in the hands of the DM and players alike to describe the damage that a target receives, be it a greavous wound (because a substantial portion of a character's HPs have been depleted) or mearly exaustion as the result of a close call (because only a minor fraction have been lost). As a result, this abstraction allows for the wonderful cimematic moments abound in motion pictures to come to life in a game; moments where long, drawn out sword fights take place with no one being scratched, until that last moment when the final blow is delivered. The nature of this, of course, is purely description.

Which brings me to my question; with all of these facts as they are, why are both of these methods nessessary inorder to reach the desired effect in a D&D game? It seems to me if someone can make an attack roll and succeed in hiting a target's armorclass, yet in a descriptive capacity "not strike" a target (or whatever else description, DM, and players deem appropriate), that the need for attack roll vs armorclass doesn't really exist. If a system allowed for just weapon damage vs hitpoints, it would allow for the effect without the extra layer of needless checking.

I apologize if my question seems like I'm ranting, or rail-roading you, and I certainly give you my thanks in advance for any insight into what the

original purposes were for those systems when they were first being devised. Perhaps you could even give your opinion as to how these systems have evolved beyond your control.

Thank you, again. :D

-Jesse "Onyx" Withrow

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Onyx***
>
> *Mr. Gygax, a question regarding a fundamental of D&D that has always weighed heavy in my mind (and if it's not one you want to tackle, I understand :P).*

Heh, Onyx...

You surely do dramatize things :lol:

This applies only to OAD&D. Later forms of the D&D game I am not responsible for.

Now I think you mean duplication, not duplicity, in the two combat factors you are so concerned with, AC and HP. If you think having both is trickery, well, what can I say other than all games are based on the fallacious, they are not real.

Anyway, on to the basic assumptions employed in those two factors.

AC is the measure of how difficult it is to make an effective attack on a target subject. One might broaden it by including dodging and parrying, but those are subsumed in the single number, as is indicated by the addition of Dex bonus, thus obviating the need for a lot of additional adjustments and dice rolling. The game is not a combat simulation, after all.

Hit points for characters are a combination of actual physical health and the character's skill in avoiding serious harm from attacks aimed at him that actually hit. This is a further measure of the defender's increasing ability to slip blows and dodge, as mentioned above in regards AC. While AC increases mainly by the wearing of superior protectionm HPs increase with the character's accumulating experience in combat reflected by level increase.

In combination the two give a base protection and survivability for the beginning character and allow that base to increase as the character increases in experience. It does not pretend to realism, but it does reflect the effects of increasing skill in a relatively accurate manner while avoiding tedious simulation-oriented considerations and endless dice rolling.

As someone who has designed a number of military miniatures rules sets, I could have made combat in the OAD&D game far more complex, including all manner of considerations for footing, elevation of the opponents, capacity to dodge, parrying skill, opponents using natural weapons, etc. Knowing that the game was not all about combat, I skipped as much of that as I could by having the main factors subsume lessers, ignoring the rest. It is a role-playing exercise where all manner of other game considerations come into play, not just fighting.

Oh, least I forget, when magic is mixed into the formula, getting anything vaguely resembling reality becomes wholly problematical :uhoh:

Cheers,
Gary

Onyx

Perhaps it's true.

Quote:

> *Heh, Onyx...*
>
> *You surely do dramatize things*

Yes, I suppose it's true. :P

At any rate, I certainly didn't think that the inclusion of both AC & HP was trickery or the like. I was just trying to understand if the common definitions of both, and to a greater extent, if your intentions for both were as I understood them.

It's also true that I understand a system that is simple is far more preferable to a system that is ultra realistic (and anyone who has played Rolemaster or its ilk can appreciate that!). The hope is ultimately for as simple, and yet as realistic a system as can be produced. I believe that D&D (as opposed to some systems I have seen) is a step in that direction.

Again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to address my question. It is an honor to have such an opportunity extended to me.

-Jesse "Onyx" Withrow

Col_Pladoh

Hi Jesse,

I was thinking of how were in a DM-like role when you posed the questions, and that's why I mentioned the dramatic aspect.

No matter what a designer does in regard to managing combat, there is going to be a number of players who dislike it. With some systems it's the majority of gamers, with others it's a minority of some size, small or large. In all cases each system will have its stalwart champions and vocal opponents. Rest assured that I was not in defensive mode when i read and responded to you. What I posted was simply the straight-

forward reasoning I used in arriving at the system that I did, and why I did so.

In the Lejendary Adventure game I used a different method, but one that is also streamlined and not a step-by-step attempt to re-inact hand-to-hand combat with weapons generally of the medieval period. As i mentioned before, when creatures with natural weapons are thrown into such a calculation, the variables one needs to consider make it a nigh impossible exercise. Magical elements compound the difficulties even further.

If you devise a fast-paced combat system that includes the major elements of actual fighting in armor with the various weapons usual, including monsters and magical attacks and defenses, hats off, and I think the gamers will beat a path to your door;)

Cheers,
Gary

Drifter Bob
Combat systems

Let me first say, it's an honor to have a chance to chat with you Mr Gygax.

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *In the Lejendary Adventure game I used a different method, but one that is also streamlined and not a step-by-step attempt to re-inact hand-to-hand combat with weapons generally of the medieval period. As i mentioned before, when creatures with natural weapons are thrown into such a calculation, the variables one needs to consider make it a nigh impossible exercise. Magical elements compound the difficulties even further.*
>
> *If you devise a fast-paced combat system that includes the major elements of actual fighting in armor with the various weapons usual, including monsters and magical attacks and defenses, hats off, and I think the gamers will beat a path to your door;)*

Have you ever seen "The Riddle of Steel"? I think it is a step in that direction, although any time you increase realism that much you run the risk of increasingly lethality to the degree that it changes the gaming experience in ways some people wont like. TROS is fast and realistic, but it's also very deadly. People who want to hold on to their characters can't fight anywhere near as often as they do in D&D.

This idea of realism is something I have always struggled with since the very first time I played D&D in summer camp back in the 70's (I embarassed to say how far back!)

I've got a lot of experience doing medieval fencing and this has gradually seeped into the way I look at gaming. I always had this theory that D&D was kind of at the laymans state of the art for when it was first designed, seemingly with data that came from the wargaming miniatures insustry. You obviously did a lot of serious research well into the development of the DMG... your treatise on Polearms from the original UA is still one of the best resources available on the internet (I recently posted it to the forum of a very serious Historical European Martial Arts organization and they were amazed)

...anyway, I digress. I always had this theory that D&D was at a fairly high level of historical accuracy for it's time, and that since then, people basically borrowed from D&D or from hollywood or from fantasy novels, with each new generation of role playing game, (and eventually CRPG's and LARPs), while simultaneously, people outside of RPG's learned more and more about real period warfare (even though historical fighting isn't precisely the same as that in a fantasy setting) to such a degree that there ended up being this big gap, to where today hard core medieval fencing enthusiasts and weapon nuts are so very critical of any RPG. They site the 15 lb swords, seemingly nonexistant armor types, impossible double weapons and etc.

I'm kind of in the middle, I really like RPG's and love to tinker with them, I find them at their hyperbolic best fascinating insights into the human condition (like any simulation) and certainly good fun when you have a decent group of people together.

Anyway, I was wondering what you thought of specific ideas such as giving reach advantages to long weapons, allowing the defensive characteristics of weapons to come into play, allowing combatants to choose between aggressive, neutral, or defensive postures, giving armor an ablative or absorbing ability, and etc., with the dilemma of the natural weapons dealt with by some sort of close combat ("grappling", in current D&D parlance) mode...

As to realism and survivability, I think you can always find good mechanics if one looks closely at real life. There is some reason why so many remarkable "heroic" indivudals from history survived so many battles and adventrues. One of the things they seem to be learning just very recently in a lot of the Historical fencing groups is just exactly how effective armor really was. Rivited mail, for example, worn with a padded coat, seems able to endure attacks from most period weapons, including longbows and lances. I imagine thats why people tended to wear the stuff! Nor was it as heavy and bulky as people thought, as you know.

Just a few thoughts, I'm not dogmatic about it like some people, I'd be fascinated to hear what you think.

DB

Sir Elton

Sunday, 28th March, 2004, 02:28 AM

Hello Gary!

A question that I need to know about. I'm beginning to see that the Dungeon setting might not be so viable after all. You go in, break in the door for somebody's house, and you raid it. You break the Law in doing so. :(I bet Dungeons were easier to map at the time, and the introductory adventure in the Basic Set (the one I got in 1986) was a basic adventure.

However, I'm thinking going back to the other Basics will make for an interesting adventure. A good villain, a nice hide out (i.e. a villa or warehouse), some flunkies, and a good motivation for the PCs makes for good stories for the PCs to tell.

The problem with the "Dungeon" based adventure is that its a bit unrealistic. You go in, you clear a dungeon, you go out, hopefully with your life intact. However, you can improve on a classic. For instance: "The Keep on the Borderlands," or "Return to the Keep on the Borderlands." You have everything in that module to tell an interesting story. Just improve the motivation (The PCs are mercenaries hired to take out the evil cult in one of the caves in typical Covert action) and the PCs can tell a realistic story.

All module writers really need to do is provide a good map, some villians, allies, and neutrals, and then leave it up to the Players to tell a good story. Right?

Col_Pladoh

Sunday, 28th March, 2004, 01:34 PM

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Drifter Bob**
>
> Let me first say, it's an honor to have a chance to chat with you Mr Gygax.

Greetings Drifter Bob,

Glad to be here to engage in a bit if discussion with you.

O have not seen "The Riddle of Steel", but from the sound if its name I should suppose it is a combat game rather than an RPG.

There is indeed a need for lethality in a single successful attack when simulation of actual combat is desired. That is why I have stayed away from it in the combat systems I have devised for my fantasy RPG designs, (On the old *Boot Hill* game one could get a character killed in a single exchange of gunfire.) As combat is the most popular activity in the RPG game form, it is pretty well necessary to allow for plenty of it, so...

Realism when one deals with magic, fantastic beasts, and all that makes up the FRPG seems a marginal concept to me. Verisimilitude is another matter, but the basis for play is improbablity. If the fantastic premises can be accepted, then quibbles about realism within the forum of play have more to do with perception than actuality.

When I wrote my parts of the *Chainmail* military miniatures rules (c.1969) I had done considerable historical research, and my interest in the subject of militray history, arms and armor, has not waned since...althouh my available reading time has. I correspond with a fellow who is studying the old fencing manuals, fights thus. Also last year at this time I was a guest speaker at the Higgins Armory Museum, and gained a considerable insight into matters there.

Quote:

> ...while simultaneously, people outside of RPG's learned more and more about real period warfare (even though historical fighting isn't precisely the same as that in a fantasy setting) to such a degree that there ended up being this big gap, to where today hard core medieval fencing enthusiasts and weapon nuts are so very critical of any RPG. They site the 15 lb swords, seemingly nonexistant armor types, impossible double weapons and etc.

Perhaps they should reconsider the genre. It is fantasy. They blench at minor things and accept flying, fire-breathing dragons and working magic, which seems to me quite eccentric, like swallowing a camel whole, then straining at a gnat.

As you note, RPGs are for entertainment and fun. they are not meant to be simulations of something, for that something never existed;)

Quote:

> Anyway, I was wondering what you thought of specific ideas such as giving reach advantages to long weapons, allowing the defensive characteristics of weapons to come into play, allowing combattants to choose between aggressive, neutral, or defensive postures, giving armor an ablative or absorbing ability, and etc., with the dilemma of the natural weapons dealt with by some sort of close combat ("grappling", in current D&D parlance) mode...

Those are valid considerations, but they complicate and extend the time needed for combat. Why include them if a simpler system delivers the same geenral outcome in a shorter period of time?

As for armor, I have indeed gone to a system where it provided protection that absorbs damage, losing its "health" on the prosess. This is in the

Lejendary Adventure RPG. In it there are basically four kinds of armor--cloth, leather, metal mesh, and metal plate, each in half or full. Well-armored Avatars in the game are indeed very hard to wound seriously, but attacks do bypass armor now and then, this reflecting the weak points in any protection.

> Quote:
>
> *As to realism and survivability, I think you can always find good mechanics if one looks closely at real life. There is some reason why so many remarkable "heroic" indivudals from history survived so many battles and adventrues. One of the things they seem to be learning just very recently in a lot of the Historical fencing groups is just exactly how effective armor really was. Rivited mail, for example, worn with a padded coat, seems able to endure attacks from most period weapons, including longbows and lances. I imagine thats why people tended to wear the stuff! Nor was it as heavy and bulky as people thought, as you know.*

Hmmm... Yes, I agree with the value of armor, how it protected well. However, I disagree about field plate being proof against lances and longbow arrows, or even heavy crossbow bolts at close range. There was a serious effort to ban the heavy crossbow from warfare, you know, because it could pierce plate. The French knights fell in droves from English (Welsh) longbow arrows, and there is an histotical record wherein examples are cited: an arrow piercing shield, armored arm, and then cuirasse, pinning the lot to the target sybject's chest; the same for a rider's leg armor being pierced on both sides, pinning the leg to his horse. I think this is in CWC Oman's work on medieval warfare. Somewhere, and I don't recall where, there is a study that shows the foot-pounds of pressure on a square inch of metal--the point of a lance being driven at a canter by a man in armor seated upon a heavy warhorse. Only a deflection could prevent it from penetrating the best of steel plate. There is also the example of Charles the Bold of Burgundy whose plate-armor-protected leg was severed, his horse wounded by a single blow from a Swiss halbred.

> Quote:
>
> *Just a few thoughts, I'm not dogmatic about it like some people, I'd be fascinated to hear what you think.*
>
> *DB*

If that's just a few of your thoughts, I had better gird-up for some essay-lenght replies if you express many of there here :uhoh:

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Felicitations Sir Elton,

I short response to a rather lengthy question.

The dungeon adventure is certainly the favorite of the plurality of FRPG players. this is demonstrable simply by looking at the success of paper modules featuring such setting, and the sales and play of like games for computer-based play.

What you suggest, a loose plot with antagonists developed, assumes that the Game Master is ready, willing, and able to do the other 75% or so of the work necessary to make the module into something the group can have a good time playing. Generally, a GM picks up a module because he doesn't want to have to expend all that effort to entertain the players for whatever reason, but usually because of lack of time.

As for dungeon adventures being unrealistic, what about the whole premise of the FRPG? the dungeon setting is assuredly as realistic as flying horses, magic wants, spell casting, weird monsters, and heroes able to use the magic and defeat behemoths;)

The story comes from the players interacting with the environment provided by the GM. If they enjoy the environment, interact well with it, and eachother, achieve success in the process, the story created will be one that all enjoy, with or without a carefully crafted villain. Poor interaction with an environment that has all manner of cleverly done material provided by the GM results in a dullgame and a "Story" nobody cares to relate save in derisive terms.

Remember, the GM is there to facilitate the interaction of the players; characters with the environment. GM direction of what characters do is not game play, it is scripted theater (of undoubtedly low quality). More importantly, any "story" that is told comes only after the conclusion of the interaction, as a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end;)

Cheers,
Gary

Barak

Heh Mr Gygax, I'm glad to see that, on the whole, your view on most of the "complaints" about D&D or even FRPGs in general reflect mine. I fondly remember answering a rather long tirade about the fact that nowadays female characters had basically the same STR as male characters, including lenghty references to biological and sociological surveys with the simple "Ok, but you're fine with fireballs?", and I'm glad to see you would basically have answered in kind. Realism in fantasy can only go so far, eh?

Sir Elton

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**
>
> As for dungeon adventures being unrealistic, what about the whole premise of the FRPG? the dungeon setting is assuredly as realistic as flying horses, magic wants, spell casting, weird monsters, and heroes able to use the magic and defeat behemoths;)
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save in derisive terms.

Then you are quite correct there, Gary. Thanks for the answer!

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Barak***

Heh Mr Gygax, I'm glad to see that, on the whole, your view on most of the "complaints" about D&D or even FRPGs in general reflect mine. I fondly remember answering a rather long tirade about the fact that nowadays female characters had basically the same STR as male characters, including lenghty references to biological and sociological surveys with the simple "Ok, but you're fine with fireballs?", and I'm glad to see you would basically have answered in kind. Realism in fantasy can only go so far, eh?

Howdy Barak!

Just so. The only limit I placed on female PCS was no Str above 18. In actual history female participation in what would be considered adventuring was virtually nil. i am always amused when history programs on the tube attempt Political Corectness by featuring the only examples of female duelists, pirates, warriors, etc. They represent less than one percent of the whole being considered, and featuring one-armed men in the same roles would be at least as meaningful historically. Frankly, not only did society generally prevent such participation, but I believe most women were generally not the least interested in engaging in such dangerous and questionable activities.

That said, I never enforced the rule in my own game, for the milieu is fantasy, and given that, why have a physical power barrier when there are no others? If any player, male or female, wants to have a female character that is as strong as any male, there is no reason not to allow that.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***

Then you are quite correct there, Gary. Thanks for the answer!

Welcome,Sir Elton,

I can speak to the matter of a dull story, because now and again I have spent a lot of time creating adventure material that left the players quite flat, and nary an interesting tale came from such exercise, although the lads would grimmace and roll their eyes when the scenario was mentioned... :\

As one excellent novelist advised, take that part of a story you like best and throw it away, is it is likely the worst part. Sometimes that will prove to true in both fiction and module crafting.

Cheers,
Gary

Drifter Bob

Arrows and armor and halberds, Oh my!

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***

Greetings Drifter Bob,
have not seen "The Riddle of Steel", but from the sound if its name I should suppose it is a combat game rather than an RPG.

No, it's a game alright, and a pretty good one. Kind of in the spirit of the old Robert E Howard Conan stuff, with a lot of historical influence as well. It's actually been quite well recieved in general, in spite of some unpopular features like it's magic system. The combat s very fast, strategic, and even incorporates role playing elements, but it is quite lethal. It wouldn't have to be, IMHO, but that's how they wanted this game to be.

Quote:

There is indeed a need for lethality in a single successful attack when simulation of actual combat is desired. [snip] As combat is the most popular activity in the RPG game form, it is pretty well necessary to allow for plenty of it, so...

With all due respect, there is always the issue of quality over quantity. To put it in perspective, I would compare say, an old school D&D game where I might go through 5 or 6 memorable and challenging combats in a game session, to, say, any number of vaguely D&D inspired computer role playing games, where you slaughter hundreds of monsters in a more or less indistinguishable flood of bad guys....

Or you could compare a movie like Akira Kirosawa's Yojimbo, to the average Xena episode. The Xena episode has a lot more fights, but the realistic scrapes in Yojimbo are way more exciting to me. (Not that I'm knocking Xena....)

Quote:

Realism when one deals with magic, fantastic beasts, and all that makes up the FRPG seems a marginal concept to me. Verisimilitude is another

And yet, weapon tables exist, rules for different types of armor and etc. exist, all of which helps make the game more internally consistant. You can have a magical universe with internal consistency. I don't advocate being a 'slave' to realism, but that one can borrow from both history and real physics (and places where they meet, as in the fencing techniques from the Fechtbuchs, which TROS makes ample use of) to find fun mechanics for your game.

Please understand, I'm not trying to challenge your experience! I have immense respect for you and for old school D&D in particular. But consider the way you so successfully borrowed the real mechanics of the Medieval Criminal underworld in your excellent D20 book, The Canting Crew, by incorporating them into the fantasy milieux and making them your own. I think the same can be done with things like realistic combat mechanics, without necessarily screwing up game balance.

Of course, what the hell do I know :0 I'ts just my dumb theory....

> Quote:
>
> *When I wrote my parts of the Chainmail military miniatures rules (c.1969) I had done considerable historical research, and my interest in the subject of militray history, arms and armor, has not waned since...althouh my available reading time has. I correspond with a fellow who is studying the old fencing manuals, fights thus. Also last year at this time I was a guest speaker at the Higgins Armory Museum, and gained a considerable insight into matters there.*

I do a lot of this kind of stuff as well. I've been playing those old table top wargames since my dad introduced them to me back in the 70's. I just hosted a gathering of ARMA (probably the largest and best established of the new "Western Martial Arts" historical fencing groups) here in New Orleans, about a month ago. I've been sparring with padded swords for 20 years but seeing the Fechtbuch techniques actually applied by some people who have truly grasped them was an eye opener. WMA is every bit as real as traditional "Eastern" martial arts, in some ways it's more impressive, IMHO

> Quote:
>
> *Perhaps they should reconsider the genre. It is fantasy. They blench at minor things and accept flying, fire-breathing dragons and working magic, which seems to me quite eccentric, like swallowing a camel whole, then straining at a gnat.*
>
> *As you note, RPGs are for entertainment and fun. they are not meant to be simulations of something, for that something never existed;)*

Of course, and yet, (again, with all due respect) I think there is always some element of "Sim", to use RPG grognard parlance, in any rpg game. My point is that where we are borrowing mechanics from reality or history, we should get the real ones, (not accidentally transpose fake ones from say, hollywood) and also seriously examine what are the most relevant. Just as you did when first designing D&D.

I don't think many game designers since your day have done the kind of research that you did. Not until very recently at any rate.

> Quote:
>
> *Those are valid considerations, but they complicate and extend the time needed for combat. Why include them if a simpler system delivers the same geenral outcome in a shorter period of time?*

Well, you are always going to model some factors, whether the system is simple or complex. Personally, from my sparring experience, I think skill and weapon size (and weapon balance) are more important for defense than say, naturally inherent co-ordination. You could take the most agile acrobat from cirque de soleil, give him a 20" short sword, and send him at an old fat guy like me with a 36" arming sword, and I'm going to nail him every time.

I have actually put this to the test (almost!) several times.

Similarly, I think reach is a more important factor than almost anything else in determining who strikes first....

> Quote:
>
> *As for armor, I have indeed gone to a system where it provided protection that absorbs damage, losing its "health" on the prosess. This is in the Lejendary Adventure RPG. In it there are basically four kinds of*

I'd really like to check out Lejendary Adventures, Iv'e been interested in it ever since I got the canting crew. It's definately on my list the next time I get a little extra scratch.

You are right about bypassing armor too, btw. I think until people started really being armored literally from head to toe in the late 12th century, the best way to defeat armor was to go around it. Excavations at the Wisby battlefield in Sweeden show that 2/3 of the skelletons which showed signs of injury had cut marks to the lower left leg, below the hauberk and below the shield...

> Quote:
>
> *Hmmm... Yes, I agree with the value of armor, how it protected well. However, I disagree about field plate being proof against lances and longbow arrows, or even heavy crossbow bolts at close range. There was a serious effort to ban the heavy crossbow from warfare, you know, because it could pierce plate. The French knights fell in droves from English (Welsh) longbow*

Well, this still contraversial, and I certainly don't want to start an argument about it, but on the assumption that you are probably interested to know this, the current best evidence suggests that in the famous English longbow victories such as Crecy, Poitiers, Agincourt, etc., the longbows did not actually penetrate the armor of the French Knights, in most cases they actually killed their mounts. At Agincourt this apparently led to the French knights slogging on foot uphill through mud toward the English defenders...

(More about crossbows further down)

> Quote:

There are always anecdotes like this, but few self bows (i.e. bows) that have been tested recently with a variety of arrows seem to be able to pierce actual plate armor. Again, it's contraversial and I don't want to start an argument, but if you check the forums at ARMA, AEMMA, Sword Forum online, Myarmoury, etc., you can see that several tests have been done recently. Some period weapons like polearms and very heavy crossbows will penetrate armor, but not many can, and it's never easy....

Quote:

> *that shows the foot-pounds of pressure on a square inch of metal--the point of a lance being driven at a canter by a man in armor seated upon a heavy warhorse. Only a deflection could prevent it from penetrating the best of steel plate.*

Actually, with all due respect, there was another recent event which seems to contradict this. This may be because, as you probably know, there has been revolutionary changes in the understanding of how to properly make medieval armor in the last few years, particularly mail, which they used to make "butted" at Renaissance festivals and such, but have now come to understand was never actually used except when made with each link actually riveted.

There was just very recently an experiment done by Eric Schmidt, the mail maker and armor historian, at Royal Armories in Leeds, where they took a lance head and tried to pierce riveted mail armor with a thin cloth backing, at various amounts of pressure. Supposedly the mail finally broke slightly at only the very highest amount of pressure, but it was estimaed that the lance would not have penetrated through to the flesh.

Quote:

> *There is also the example of Charles the Bold of Burgundy whose plate-armor-protected leg was severed, his horse wounded by a single blow from a Swiss halbred.*

Yeah, poor Charles had nothing but trouble from those uppity Swiss peasants. I am familiar with this anecdote, and I think it is a true one. The Halberd was specifically designed to penetrate armor, and like most pole-weapons and other specifically armor piercing weapons, it could do so when applied with massive force (i.e., a haymaker).

The same can be said for the very heaviest of crossbows, some of which from that period were made with as much as 1,000 pounds of pressure, but these were specialist weapons and very expensive. The typical hunting crossbow was unlikely to penetrate mail, let alone plate.

And armor kept improving as well as weapons. As I'm sure you know by the Renaissance they were regularly turning out literally bullet "proof" armor which they would shoot with a musket and mark the dent (proof).

Quote:

> *If that's just a few of your thoughts, I had better gird-up for some essay-lenght replies if you express many of there here :uhoh:*
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

yeah, I tend to be quite long winded, one of my many faults. I promise I wont post here often though. I'll take a long time to digest what you have said so I can really learn from it, rather than just replying off the cuff... this is too good an opportunity squander over ego!

thanks for taking the time to respond to my post.

DB

Sir Elton

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Welcome,Sir Elton,*
>
> *I can speak to the matter of a dull story, because now and again I have spent a lot of time creating adventure material that left the players quite flat, and nary an interesting tale came from such exercise, although the lads would grimmace and roll their eyes when the scenario was mentioned... :*
>
> *As one excellent novelist advised, take that part of a story you like best and throw it away, is it is likely the worst part. Sometimes that will prove to true in both fiction and module crafting.*

That part can be heart wrenching. I had to revise the current module I'm working on because it felt like I was writing a novel. :(So I had to do a different approach. The Argonautica is fun to read and watch on screen, but the way I was writing it as a novel, it would be hated by the community that would buy it.

I had to reduce the story of Jason and the Argonauts to a Timeline for the DM's reference, and then describe each area as an area of adventure. The other way I was doing it, I might as well be writing a novel. :(

Col_Pladoh

Drifter Bob,

To cut to the chase here, for I haven't the time to spare for more point-by-point reply to so long a missive, in *my considered opinion* detailed "realistic" combat rules are a detriment to the RPG, not a benefit. There is already undue stress placed upon combat as the central theme of the game form, while it is in fact only one of several key elements. The designer would better serve the audience by stressing the other elements

than would be dine by spending yet more content space on detailing fighting.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***
>
> *That part can be heart wrenching. I had to revise the current module I'm working on because it felt like I was writing a novel. :(So I had to do a different approach. The Argonautica is fun to read and watch on screen, but the way I was writing it as a novel, it would be hated by the community that would buy it.*
>
> *I had to reduce the story of Jason and the Argonauts to a Timeline for the DM's reference, and then describe each area as an area of adventure. The other way I was doing it, I might as well be writing a novel. :(*

Understood!

Now and then I wax eloquent, and then realize how boring it is to me to read aloud all the story I have put into the adventure, even as the players grow restless wanting to game, not listen to me reading.

Ah well,
Gary

Joseph Elric Smith

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Howdy!*
>
> *As for a bio, I am working on an autobiography in fits and starts, still mainly recording what I recall from hy childhood. It isn't all that much fun to write, and with my gaming-related work load being what it is I wonder if i will ever get sround to completing the bio.*
>
> *Ciao,*
> *Gary*

I keep telling you Gary you need a secretary like me to help out. :)
Ken

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Joseph Elric Smith***
>
> *I keep telling you Gary you need a secretary like me to help out. :)*
> *Ken*

Sure Ken...

If your shorthand speed is at 100 words a minute, and you don't mind working for a room, board, and $20 a week spending money, you git a jog :confused:

Heh,
Gary

RFisher

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *As someone who has designed a number of military miniatures rules sets, I could have made combat in the OAD&D game far more complex, including all manner of considerations for footing, elevation of the opponents, capacity to dodge, parrying skill, opponents using natural weapons, etc. Knowing that the game was not all about combat, I skipped as much of that as I could by having the main factors subsume lessers, ignoring the rest. It is a role-playing exercise where all manner of other game considerations come into play, not just fighting.*

Well, sure. But wasn't the question asking why OAD&D combat wasn't more *simple* rather than why it wasn't more *complex*?

Instead of having both a to-hit roll and a damage roll, why not a single roll?

One thing that strikes me when I pull out my old D&D and Traveller books is how much you and Marc Miller--both veteran wargame designers--understood that roleplaying games needed an abstract combat system. There's a real contrast between those two games and e.g. The Fantasy Trip, which was really a miniatures skirmish game with roleplaying elements tacked on.

sluggo the sleazebag

all in the family

Hello again, Gary,

If you don't mind, I have a family question for you. From the accounts I've read, you playtested early versions of OD&D with your children to great success. I'm curious, how many of them still play D&D? Do you still DM any sessions for them? Have any of them worked on gaming publications and, if so, how does their work differ from your own?

Thanks,

Sluggo

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **RFisher**
>
> Well, sure. But wasn't the question asking why OAD&D combat wasn't more simple rather than why it wasn't more complex?

Perhaps, but I read it as questioning the doubling up on AC and HP benefits in combat, and not have more realism in the system.

You are correct about the need for keeping combat abstract in the RPG. Every complication demands more rules and explanations, more time spent resolving combat, that's fine for a military or dueling simulation, but not in an RPG where there are so many other things to do besides killing things;)

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **sluggo the sleazebag**
>
> Hello again, Gary,
>
> If you don't mind, I have a family question for you. From the accounts I've read, you playtested early versions of OD&D with your children to great success. I'm curious, how many of them still play D&D? Do you still DM any sessions for them? Have any of them worked on gaming publications and, if so, how does their work differ from your own?
>
> Thanks,
>
> Sluggo

Hola Sluggo!

All six of my children have played RPGs. the two eldest, Ernie and Elise did indeed serve as the first two play-testers of OD&D. Later daughters Heidi and Cindy played with me as the DM, also with their young brother Luke as the DM--who they told what to do until he came to me and I set him straight.

The girls never were captivated by gaming as were my boys. ther played for a short time only, relatively speaking. In fact I would recruit Heidi's boy friends to my AD&D campaign when we were living out in the country, and she got cross at me for having to wave goodnight to two or three ex-beaux AD&Ding in the living room with me when she was with a new boy friend going out on a date.

Sons Ernie and Luke wrote the *Lost City of Gaxmoor* D20 module a couple of years ago for Troll Lord Games. It definately shows the influence of my creative and DMing style. I had a lot of fun play-testing it. They have no plans for more such design, however, as Ernie works all the time now, is buying his own house soon, and Luke is in a job that keeps him very busy and relocating periodically, so he doesn't even get in miuch gaming.

Son Alex age 17 is still at home/ Heplays mainly computer games, although he enjoys participating in my LA game campaign on Thursday nights....when his school work allows it.

Cheers,
Gary

edge3343

Gary, I just got married last weekend and I was wondering what sagely advice you could offer a newly wedded RPGer?

http://clients.ransomgroup.com/ashle...s/000_0445.jpg

Drifter Bob

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh**

Drifter Bob,

To cut to the chase here, for I haven't the time to spare for more point-by-point reply to so long a missive, in my considered opinion detailed "realistic" combat rules are a detriment to the RPG, not a benefit. There is already undue stress placed upon combat as the central theme of the game form, while it is in fact only one of several key elements. The designer would better serve the audience by stressing the other elements than would be dine by spending yet more content space on detailing fighting.

Cheers,
Gary

Gary, thanks for responding, and for your patience with my heretical ideas. I don't mind you not going through point by point, I thought you might appreciate some of the historical data. I'm sorry I'm so long winded.

Regarding realism in RPG's, I guess we disagree. I do believe combat is abstracted, but reality can lend us the best, most intuitive, most internally consistant mechanics. As for the combat focus of most rpg's, I agree (i thnk this is a legacy of DnDs evolution from wargames, though you could address that much better than I!) but I think, while complexity must be reigned in, realistic mechanics such as those in combat, can be interpreted and applied to the game. I'd see the combat mechanics, when well done, as a good place to start for many other things.

One sort of example of this perhaps is the Dying Earth RPG, where they put this persuasion / rebuttal system where people can convince each other of things, (like in the cugel stories in particular) with a kind of a competetive dynamic. Not realistic per say but with a real-feeling mechanic, IMHO, which makes things more fun. I'd like to see more of this kind of stuff brought into more RPGs for everything from Thief (sorry, rogue) abilities, to spell research, wilderness survival... any number of others.

If done right this can actually enhance role playing rather than getting in the way, which happens if too much complexity is allowed to creep in, always a danger.

DB

Col_Pladoh

Edge3343, Congratulations!

With a beautiful bride like that the only thing I can suggest that you don't know already is this: Pay more attention to her than to gaming :D If she doesn't like RPGing, keep your own down to the "one night a week our with the boys" level until you can win her over to the fold. If she is already a gamer, you are twice lucky, amigo...

Cheerio,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Monday, 29th March, 2004, 11:45 PM

Howdy Drifter Bob,

When a search for realistic combat mechanics begins, the challenge of devising a system that meets the "realism" required (that measure being totally subjective) that does not extend the time and effort necessary to resolve the matter becomes highly problematic.

Having rules that require players' characters to do something that the player does not wish seems to me to be the antithesis of role-playing-- aside from the compulsions of the occasional casting of magic spells that force such compliance and where saving throws are allowed.

None the less, individual taste can not be disputed. Good luck in your quest for the perfect combat resolution system. If you devise something that meets that measure broadly, it will likely revolutionize the whole of the approach to RPGs. However, any rules governing how a character must specifically act in key situations move the game system away from role-playing.

Cheers,
Gary

Sir Elton

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 12:59 AM

Drifter Bob, you have some good ideas. However, perfection is unattainable :D.

Gary,

Combat is brought into the foray because some emotions (except fear and faith) are hard to inspire in a game. I think what Drifter Bob wants to do is come up with a mechanic that makes this part of the game more imaginative. Although I don't know how he can do this.

That being said, is it possible to make a successful module around, say, a Gothic Romance novel?

Napftor

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 03:15 AM

Hi Gary!

I'm hoping this hasn't been asked in the oodles of posts before this, but can you shed any light on a chess set supposedly given to employees at TSR over Christmas in 1984? That is what a seller is claiming on Ebay...

http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll...EAWA%3AIT&rd=1

Thanks!

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 01:36 PM

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **Sir Elton***
>
> ...
>
> *Gary,*
>
> *Combat is brought into the foray because some emotions (except fear and faith) are hard to inspire in a game. I think what Drifter Bob wants to do is come up with a mechanic that makes this part of the game more imaginative. Although I don't know how he can do this.*
>
> *That being said, is it possible to make a successful module around, say, a Gothic Romance novel?*

Well Amigo,

Making an adventure based on any novel is pretty well doomed to failure. Using ideas and plot concepts from novels is workable. I have not read any gothic Romance novels, bit I have seen s few on the telly. There are elements in those that one could build into a heavy-on-role-playing module. A good deal of the romance would go by the boards even then.

What would be left are mainly problem solving and antagonistic roles, i should think...

Cheers, Gary

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 01:40 PM

> Quote:

Hola Napftor!

Sure I can. I have one. They were sculpted by "Duke" Siefried, and come in a plasitic woodgrain box with beds for each of the 32 pieces. The chessboard top lifts off to reveal the men. The two sides are Good(white) and Evil (black) with different pawns and pieces. They came unpaionted, with the black men blackwashed.

I don't recall how many sets were made, but the number is small.

Cheers,
Gary

Napftor

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 02:11 PM

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Hola Napftor!*
>
> *Sure I can. I have one. They were sculpted by "Duke" Siefried, and come in a plasitic woodgrain box with beds for each of the 32 pieces. The chessboard top lifts off to reveal the men. The two sides are Good(white) and Evil (black) with different pawns and pieces. They came unpaionted, with the black men blackwashed.*
>
> *I don't recall how many sets were made, but the number is small.*
>
> *Cheers,*
> *Gary*

Thanks! But I was also wondering if the history was correct as advertised. Anything else you'd care to add? Just wondering so if I hopefully win this puppie than I know what to tell others about its past. :D

Sir Elton

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 02:30 PM

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Col_Pladoh***
>
> *Well Amigo,*
>
> *Making an adventure based on any novel is pretty well doomed to failure. Using ideas and plot concepts from novels is workable. I have not read any gothic Romance novels, bit I have seen s few on the telly. There are elements in those that one could build into a heavy-on-role-playing module. A good deal of the romance would go by the boards even then.*
>
> *What would be left are mainly problem solving and antagonistic roles, i should think...*
>
> *Cheers, Gary*

I better stop asking you questions about modules then. The more I ask about doing a particular genre, the more you show that we are thinking along the same vein. :D

Col_Pladoh

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004, 02:38 PM

Quote:

> *Originally Posted by **Napftor***
>
> *Thanks! But I was also wondering if the history was correct as advertised. Anything else you'd care to add? Just wondering so if I hopefully win this puppie than I know what to tell others about its past. :D*

Heh,

I thought I had done that;) Duke was at TSR then, and he was hoping to expand the company's lines by adding cast items such as resin play models for adventure modules and metal miniature figures. The sets were given out as Christmas presents, yes.

I recall autographing the set in question, and I think it was at GenCon 2000. I remarked that I had just gotten out my own set and played a couple of games of chess with it not long before.

As for the number, I can't say. There were c. 300 employees at TSR then, but there might have been an over-run of sets, perhaps as many as

500. OTOH, the run might have been as small as 300. Either way, the item is rare, and the pieces look quite good in play.

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Sir Elton**
>
> *I better stop asking you questions about modules then. The more I ask about doing a particular genre, the more you show that we are thinking along the same vein. :D*

Heh-heh-heh!

Don't want to give any ideas, eh?

Be sure and have a look at the next volume in the "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds" series of reference books being published by Troll Lord Games. It is called *Insidae* as a grabber title, but it is simply a very complete guide to plotting adventure modules. The author is Dan Cross, and he did an excellent job. Using it and a work of fiction as the inspiration for the module, I do believe almost any genre and storyline could be crafted into an interesting adventure piece.

I believe they plan to release the book in early summer. I know they are editing it now.

Cheers,
Gary

sluggo the sleazebag

Hi, Gary,

Thanks for your response to my last question on family gaming. It was quite informative and gave me a lot to think about since my young daughter has been eyeing my miniatures of late.

In the meantime, I have another question for you. I'm playing a dwarven cleric that can't seem to get any respect from the other players. They're quite pushy about having me heal them whenever they get into the fray, even if they've only taken a few scratches. Moreover, they can't wait for me to offer any help, they simply demand it. They also expect me to set aside spells for the food and water they always seem to forget, which can be frustrating for a guy who doesn't have that many spell slots and is trying to play a battle cleric. In short, I'm feeling a bit disrepected and considering whether or not I should cut them off or simply start charging them for spells.

I know it sounds bad, but I was hoping you could help me out with some sage advice. I don't want to become an unhelpful, adamant dwarf, but I would like to find a happy middle ground with these guys.

Sincerely,

Sluggo

Col_Pladoh

Howdy Sluggo,

Sounds that the other PCs are indeed presuming far too much on the kind offices of your cleric. In all, the worker is worthy of his hire, and to continue to do his good work, the cleric should receive both respect and contributions.

He might explain that his ministrations are limited by his capacity to inact spells, and those spells are granted to him by his deity. The latter is quite upset at the disrespect being shown him (or her) by the other PCs who are treating his (or her) clerical servant as *their* servant. That belittles the deity, and unless attitudes change immediately, generous cointributions to the priest are made in return for his services *on behalf of the deity*, no more spells will be forthcoming.

If the deity is speaking through the cleric, and it would under such circumstances, how can the others demure? If they do, they should risk rather severe retribution.

FWIW,
Gary

Sir Elton

OH what the fork, I one more question, Gary.

Looking at Eosin's thread on starting an E-Publishing company, and I'm getting a degree to back it up :), I thought that maybe it is time to seriously think about starting my own. Now that I have been thoroughly "corrupted" into actually thinking that I can be successful.

Someone said he'd help me out with my Argonautica module in getting it published. I could use more help. Got any advice for somebody crazy enough to go down this road, like me?

Col_Pladoh

Quote:

Heh,

While I do professional consulting, I really established the charge in order to not have to spend my time answering questions like that.

The obvious: The hobby gaming market is a small, niche one, and it is not growing. The advent of the D20 license had brought a flood of new publishers into the field, and with the established companies they have glutted the module market.

The result: Sales of a given module will be in the low thousands if published by a company with good distribution. Otherwise, they will likely be in the hundreds.

What more can I say?

Cheers,
Gary

ScottGLXIX

Hey Col.
Can you let me know if my estimation of illusion/phantasm spells is correct?
If a group of characters encountered a phantasmal force pit. The illusionist is hidden nearby and maintaining concentration on the spell. All of the players believe the pit is real. One player believes he falls into the pit and takes falling damage. At this point, the phantasm aspect of the spell takes over, the effects of this being similar to the effects of hallucinatory insanity. The player that fell into the pit believes he's in a pit. His companions believe he is in the pit. Their conviction is so strong that they would go through the actions of lowering a rope into the pit to help their comrade out. The party then goes on their way, never knowing the encounter was a phantasmal force spell, and one character down the hit points suffered from the fall.
If on the other hand, one of the party members realized the pit was an illusion, and conveyed this information to the rest of the party, the fellow in the pit would realize he was just sitting on the floor in the hall, and the hit points would be recovered.
Sound correct?
Thanks.
Scott

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***
>
> *Hey Col.*
> *Can you let me know if my estimation of illusion/phantasm spells is correct?*
> *If a group of characters encountered a phantasmal force pit. The illusionist is hidden nearby and maintaining concentration on the spell. All of the players believe the pit is real. One player believes he falls into the pit and takes falling damage. At this point, the phantasm aspect of the spell takes over, the effects of this being similar to the effects of hallucinatory insanity. The player that fell into the pit believes he's in a pit. His companions believe he is in the pit. Their conviction is so strong that they would go through the actions of lowering a rope into the pit to help their comrade out. The party then goes on their way, never knowing the encounter was a phantasmal force spell, and one character down the hit points suffered from the fall.*
> *If on the other hand, one of the party members realized the pit was an illusion, and conveyed this information to the rest of the party, the fellow in the pit would realize he was just sitting on the floor in the hall, and the hit points would be recovered.*
> *Sound correct?*
> *Thanks.*
> *Scott*

Ho Scott!

We are in total accors save for the last part.

Any damage believed to have been suffered is actual, caused by the mind of the victim--think of stgamta for an example. So disbelief after the fact does NOT mean automatic recovery. The harm done is actual, and it must be healed as any other damage;)

Cheers,
Gary

Col_Pladoh

> Quote:
>
> *Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***
>
> *Hey Col.*
> *Can you let me know if my estimation of illusion/phantasm spells is correct?*
> *If a group of characters encountered a phantasmal force pit. The illusionist is hidden nearby and maintaining concentration on the spell. All of the players believe the pit is real. One player believes he falls into the pit and takes falling damage. At this point, the phantasm aspect of the spell takes over, the effects of this being similar to the effects of hallucinatory insanity. The player that fell into the pit believes he's in a pit. His companions believe he is in the pit. Their conviction is so strong that they would go through the actions of lowering a rope into the pit to help their comrade out. The party then goes on their way, never knowing the encounter was a phantasmal force spell, and one character down the hit*

points suffered from the fall.
If on the other hand, one of the party members realized the pit was an illusion, and conveyed this information to the rest of the party, the fellow in the pit would realize he was just sitting on the floor in the hall, and the hit points would be recovered.
Sound correct?
Thanks.
Scott

Ho Scott!

We are in total accord save for the last part.

Any damage believed to have been suffered is actual, caused by the mind of the victim--think of stgamta for an example. So disbelief after the fact does NOT mean automatic recovery. The harm done is actual, and it must be healed as any other damage;)

Cheers,
Gary

Piratecat   Sunday, 4th April, 2004, 06:20 PM

Hey, all -- Gary has asked us to let folks know that he's going to be away from the internet for a while. He's not ignoring us, but he has asked that we close the Q&A thread for the time being. We'll reopen it once he's back.

More info when we have it!

EDIT - the new thread can be found here:

http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=104817

Thanks to Grodog for reminding us to post a link. :)